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# AGAWAM

## ADVERTISER NEWS

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## Even distribution of cases remain on isolation

**By Gregory A. Scibelli**  
[gscibelli@turley.com](mailto:gscibelli@turley.com)

AGAWAM – Cases are still rising and Agawam's case rate for COVID-19 was higher in the latest report released by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on New Year's Eve last Thursday.

Agawam remains in the "red" and is labeled a high risk for the spread of the coronavirus with a positive test rate above five percent and case rate larger than 10 per 100,000 population.

Agawam has been a red community for several weeks now, as is more than half of the state's 351 communities.

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A COVID-19 testing site was held for Agawam residents on Monday, Dec. 21 in the large parking lot at Six Flags New England. The town sponsored the testing day, which drew a line of cars for the duration of the event. COVID-19 numbers in Agawam have been steadily rising in the past two and a half months. PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Several communities surrounding Agawam have also remained in the high-risk category for several weeks, including Southwick, Westfield, West Springfield, Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee.

While the DPH reports case number updates each Thursday, though the Town of Agawam's health department regularly reports updated case numbers two or three days a week. The last update prior to press time was released Thursday, Dec. 31 and stated Agawam had a total of 1,450 cases, which accounts for about 5 percent of the population in town.

**CASES** | page 2

## Michael Theroux named interim health director

*The appointment is an audition for the full-time job*

**By Shelby Macri**  
[s.macri@turley.com](mailto:s.macri@turley.com)

AGAWAM – December of 2020 saw the end to more than just a tough year, as Health Director Kathleen Auer retired with no successor. Auer gave a notice of her retirement a year in advance and the decision didn't have anything to do with the COVID pandemic.

When Auer left her office she knew that a few applications for the position had been reviewed and interviews had been conducted but no one was picked for the job.

"We need to make sure that whoever we pick has the right licenses and knows the work around the office already," Mayor William Sapelli said. "It's difficult to find qualified and certified people, but there was someone in the office who was available."

Sapelli was referring to Michael Theroux, who has been chosen to be the interim Health Director starting Jan. 4. Theroux worked closely with Auer and assisted her as the Sanitation Officer, he has also worked closely with public health nurse Sherry Petrucci. Theroux knows the department, knows the town and all the areas, has all the necessary li-

censes, and had done testing and inspections needed for the Health Director position.

"There's a distinct possibility for him to be the director, he's been a member of the health department for at least three years," Sapelli said.

He said Theroux will be the interim director for six months will be evaluated at the end of that time period to see if he will be appointed as the director. Giving Theroux plenty of time to see what the position will offer and the town is able to see how he handles his responsibilities.

"So I was aware that they did not have many qualified applicants for the Health Agent position so I was preparing myself to accept the interim position if they asked me too," Theroux said. "The position change has not been that bad as I was already doing a lot of the inspectional work and COVID-19 compliance work. The only change is managing all the nurses and other workers employed by the Health Department."

Theroux has been a town employee for over 18 years, starting as a camp counselor at Perry Lane Camp before working full time in the Agawam DPW grounds department.

He counted to work for the town while he received his associates and graduated with honors

**DIRECTOR** | page 2



Liquor pouring establishments like The Still Bar & Grill will not have to pay a license fee after the Agawam City Council approved waiving the \$1,500 fee for 2021. PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

## Council approves waiver of pour licenses (for 2021)

**By Gregory A. Scibelli**  
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AGAWAM – The Agawam City Council unanimously approved a waiver of the \$1,500 pour license for alcohol-serving establishments.

The move will help out about 30 businesses with such licenses.

Council President Christopher Johnson said there has been a dialogue between himself, Mayor William Sapelli, and the city solicitor for several weeks.

"We have been talking about this for about four five weeks now," said Johnson. "It would apply only to apply to pour licenses in restaurants or bars."

Johnson stated several surrounding communities have similarly waived the fees in order to help the struggling part of the economy.

"West Springfield, Springfield, and several other towns have waived the fees," Johnson said.

Sapelli would bring the measure forward right before the council meeting, necessitating an emergency preamble so the measure could be voted on immediately.

The council rules state an item must first appear on an agenda as new business and cannot be voted until a subsequent meeting.

The emergency preamble, however, exists in cases where the timing is sensitive. It is not used often in Agawam, and Sapelli was seeking to get the fee waiver passed before license renewals were due for 2021.

"This is the last meeting of the year and we had to get this done in one meeting rather than two," Sapelli decided to waive the fee entirely due to the closure of busi-

ness during the pandemic and the restrictions they had to follow when they reopened. He further explained that this waiver will help restaurants, banquet halls, and clubs as they have suffered even during re-opening.

Local and small businesses and restaurants have suffered during their closures and this waiver is an acknowledgment of the hard year these businesses have dealt with.

Package stores had remained open during the pandemic and received fewer limitations and are not included in the waiver. Package stores are currently being forced to close by 9:30 p.m. and non-package stores that sell alcohol must cease alcohol sales at 9:30 p.m. to comply with the governor's order from Nov. 6.

Sapelli thought about bringing

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## Scarf donations sought

AGAWAM – Loaves and Fishes is in desperate need of White socks, Scarves, Hats and Gloves. Most especially since COVID-19 hit us all last March, the number of folks in need of extra help in our communities has increased dramatically. You may bring your generous donations to the Sacred Heart Parish Center at 1061 Springfield Street in Feeding Hills. There will be a basket in the entry way just as you come through the first set of doors. Donations will be accepted through February 2021. Please call Pastoral Minister Deb Brancesco RN with any questions at 786.8200 ext. 3.

"I love being in public service

## Friends of Agawam Library announce annual meeting

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Agawam Public Library wishes to announce that it will be holding its annual meeting of members on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021 at 11 a.m. in the main reading room of the Agawam Public Library. Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of in person attendees is limited to 10 people. This meeting is open to the public by registration and attendance via Zoom. The election of board members will be held at this meeting. All members who have paid their 2021 dues will be eligible to vote.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the annual Board of Directors meeting will be held to elect offi-

cers for the year. Again, due to restrictions, this meeting is open to the public by registration and attendance via Zoom. Voting at this meeting is limited to members of the Board of Directors.

Anyone interested in joining the Friends organization may pay his or her dues by mail before the meeting to become eligible to vote. Payments can be mailed to: Friends of the Agawam Public Library, PO BOX 478 Feeding Hills, MA 01030-0478. Please visit the Agawam Public Library's website calendar to register for the event. Registered participants will be sent the Zoom meeting link.

## Eucharistic Adoration at St. John's

AGAWAM – All are welcome and invited to join us at St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main Street, for Eucharistic Adoration, Wednesdays, 12 noon

to 5:45 p.m. with Holy Mass at 6:00 p.m. Come and spend some time in quiet prayer with our Lord Jesus Christ, present in the Eucharist.

### DIRECTOR

for his bachelor's degree. Theroux worked in the Building Department as the Code Enforcer and Sealer of Weights and Measures for four years before becoming the Sanitation Officer. He had a chance to work closely with Auer and has stepped up to the plate to fill in the health director role, he explains he had a very busy first day filled with inspections and other work needed of the position.

"I love being in public service

### from page 1

and even though it can be a challenging job in the enforcement field of it, it can also be very rewarding!" Theroux said. "I look forward to continue serving the residents of Agawam to the best of my ability." Theroux started the position and year strong this past Monday, and will be working for the town until he's evaluated in June.

### CASES ■ from page 1

According to statistics recently released by the town, which separates cases in the general community from cases nursing homes or other long-term care facilities, there are more than 300 cases that have stemmed from nursing homes, of which only one case has an individual in isolation.

In the general community, there are currently 100 active cases on isolation.

Among the current active cases on isolation, there is a pretty even distribution of cases for individuals ages 20 to 79. The age range with the highest number of active cases is the 30 to 39 age range while the 70 to 79 age group has 10 active cases. There are 17 cases each in the age groups of 40 to 49 and 50 to 59. There are 13 active cases each in the 20 to 29 and 60 to 69

age groups. There were nine active cases among young people from newborn to age 19, though that number rose quickly in the days following New Year's Eve, leading the Agawam Public Schools to declare it would be going remote for learning at the last minute (see related story).

The number of total positive cases in Agawam have increased by nearly 150 percent in just the last two months.

There have been a total of 88 deaths in Agawam from COVID-19. Of those, 82 occurred in long-term care facilities.

Mayor William Sapelli has made semi-regular video updates about the town's handling of COVID-19, though there have not been any updates in the past couple of weeks due to the holiday season.

### FEES ■ from page 1

the waiver proposal sooner, but wanted to see if conditions would improve. The Liquor License Commission unanimously voted to advise waiving the fees on Oct. 21.

Instead of better, however, conditions have gotten worse as Gov. Charlie Baker instituted a mandatory closing time of 9:30 p.m. for restaurants for in-person service and a stay-at-home advisory from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., further limiting the hours of restaurants. Also, because of the most recent holiday surges, the capacities of restaurants have been reduced back to just 25 percent.

"This segment of the economy has been hit especially hard," said Johnson. "Some of these places have not been open or barely been open during the pandemic."

There will be a revenue loss from the waiver. Sapelli estimates the town will lose about \$55,000.

To absorb the loss, Sapelli said there is extra money in different areas of the budget, as well as some CARES Act funds and grants that can help as well.

"We're in a good position, we can certainly cover a short fall of 55,000 from other areas where we saved money," Sapelli said.

The \$1,500 pour license is the largest license fee the town charges any business, Johnson said. That is why it was chosen for a waiver versus other licenses in town.

Councilor Dino Mercadante complimented the move saying it was a proactive move by the administration.

"It's an extremely good measure by the town if we adopt it," said Mercadante.

The emergency preamble was approved unanimously to allow for the immediate vote.

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## LAST CHANCE

# On Saturday, January 16th The Doors Of SILVERSCAPE DESIGNS Will CLOSE FOREVER!

The FINAL LIQUIDATION of Silverscape Designs located in Downtown Northampton will feature the most unprecedented deals on fine jewelry, silver, and diamonds in our 44 year history!

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January 16th at 6pm



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# **Adult winter challenge leads library offerings**

AGAWAM – Welcome 2021! The New Year brings a new outlook and the opportunity to participate in some activities at the Agawam Public Library. What better way to kick off the new year than with a virtual presentation called Mindfulness: A Meditation Practice and a Way of Life. Join us on Monday, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. on Zoom for a closer look into the practice of mindfulness. This is an interactive webinar that will provide attendees with the opportunity to experience progressive relaxation, mindfulness meditation and guided visualization. Motivational speaker Constance Hallinan-Lagan will lead our presentation. Constance lectures nationwide on personal development and life enrichment for many different organizations. She will bring information and insight, humor and hope to all attendees. This program will be presented on Zoom. Please register on our website: [www.agawamlibrary.org](http://www.agawamlibrary.org) or call 413-789-1550. Email links will be sent to participants on the day of the event.

Starting on Jan. 19, adults will be able to participate in a Winter Reading Challenge. Similar to our summer Bean-stack challenge, adult readers can read to earn raffle tickets for some library swag. This challenge is called "Ten to

Try Winter Reading Challenge" and will run Jan. 19 to Feb. 20. It challenges readers to try titles in ten different categories. Each category earns one raffle ticket and those that complete all ten categories will receive small prizes. Our Winter Challenge can be found on the Adult section of our website: <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/adults/>

January's Adult Grab & Go Craft Bag will include materials to create Tea-light Snowpeople and some winter themed coloring pages. Celebrate the Danish lifestyle called hygge-roughly translated means "a warm atmosphere and enjoying good things in life with good people." Online registration for the craft opened on Jan. 1, please visit our online calendar to register or call the library. Supplies are limited, so only serious inquiries, please.

pires are limited, so only serious inquiries, please.

Take time to slow down and enjoy this winter. We all deserve a fresh start in this new year. The library continues to provide services six days a week. We are open for appointments on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and Grab & Go Services are available Monday to Saturday. As always, please call the library with any and all inquiries: 413-789-1550 or visit our website: [www.agawamlibrary.org](http://www.agawamlibrary.org).

# Lesser weighs in on East-West rail report

PALMER – The following is a statement from Senator Eric P. Lesser (D-First Hampden and Hampshire) in regards to today's release of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation East-West Passenger Rail Study final report.

"After more than two years of effort, our state has completed a feasibility analysis of East-West Rail service between Pittsfield and Springfield to Boston. This report is an important step in moving this project from conception to reality. I want to thank the countless advocates, community organizations, business organizations, elected officials, and everyday citizens from every corner of our Commonwealth who wouldn't take no for an answer and demanded state-wide rail investment. The study comes at the right moment given President-Elect Biden's long history of infrastructure advocacy, and his passion for train transportation in particular along with his nominee to be Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg.

As MassDOT acknowledges, the study remains incomplete. Most importantly, the ridership estimates are far too low and do not reflect comparable rail links around the country or the economic growth the rail line will spur. The

study also does not take into account the significant environmental benefits from the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as tens of thousands of cars are taken off the road.

I look forward to working with MassDOT, our state legislative delegation, as well as our federal partners such as House Ways & Means Chairman Richard Neal, House Rules Committee Chairman Jim McGovern, Senator Warren, and Senator Markey to make statewide passenger rail service a reality.”

# Flu vaccine deadline extended for students

AGAWAM – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health had set the deadline of Dec. 31, 2020, for remote and in-person students to receive a flu vaccination unless they have obtained a medical or religious exemption. The deadline has been extended through Feb. 28, 2021. Learn more about the flu vaccine, view videos and resources.

# bridge construction goes on



The Morgan-Sullivan Bridge construction is coming along as the second half of the bridge is currently being put together. The bridge is expected to be completed in the next year to 18 months.

## ARREST LOG

The Agawam Police Department responded to 790 calls for service from Dec. 28 to Jan. 3 and recorded the following arrests. No arrests in the public log have been omitted. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

Thursday, Dec. 31

Daniel McGough, of 491 Bridge Road, Florence, was arrested at 11:23 p.m. on multiple warrants for failure to appear in court.

# Opinion

## OUR VIEW

### HISTORY MATTERS

By John Grimaldi and David Bruce Smith  
Guest columnists

#### January 1 to January 15

Whatever you call it: "Continental Colors," "Congress Flag," "Cambridge Flag," or "Grand Union Flag," it was the first national flag of the United States. According to historical lore, George Washington unveiled it Jan. 1, 1776, during the American Revolution, but the stars and stripes motif encompassed a replica of the British flag in the upper left-hand corner.

"It was sort of a compromise between the radicals who wanted to see a separate nation, and the people who were more conciliatory, and wanted to see some accommodation with the crown," according to historian and flag expert David Martucci.

The History Channel noted in June of 1777 that "the Continental Congress adopted a resolution stating, 'the flag of the United States be thirteen alternate stripes red and white' and that 'the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."

To learn more, the Grateful American Book Prize recommends Kevin Keim's and Peter Keim's "A Grand Old Flag: A History of the United States Through its Flags."

It is difficult for the iPhone generation to fathom the complexities of communication throughout history. For decades, telephones used hard-wired landlines to commence a call. And before that: the telegraph – an invention by Samuel Finley Breese Morse, who demonstrated its "efficiency" via an electrical impulse on January 6, 1838. It came with a code that Morse created using dots and dashes--instead of the alphabet--to move a message from point A to point B.

He formulated the idea in 1832; by 1838, with the assistance of his two partners, Leonard Gale and Alfred Vail, he had a working model. Morse requested funding from Congress to make the prototype. It included construction of overhead wires between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland, but the legislators demurred.

Five years later, he garnered the approval, and the money, to proceed; on May 24, 1844 Morse sent his first telegraphic message: "What hath God wrought."

For more information, the Grateful American Book Prize recommends Lewis Coe's "The Telegraph: A History of Morse's Invention and Its Predecessors in the United States."

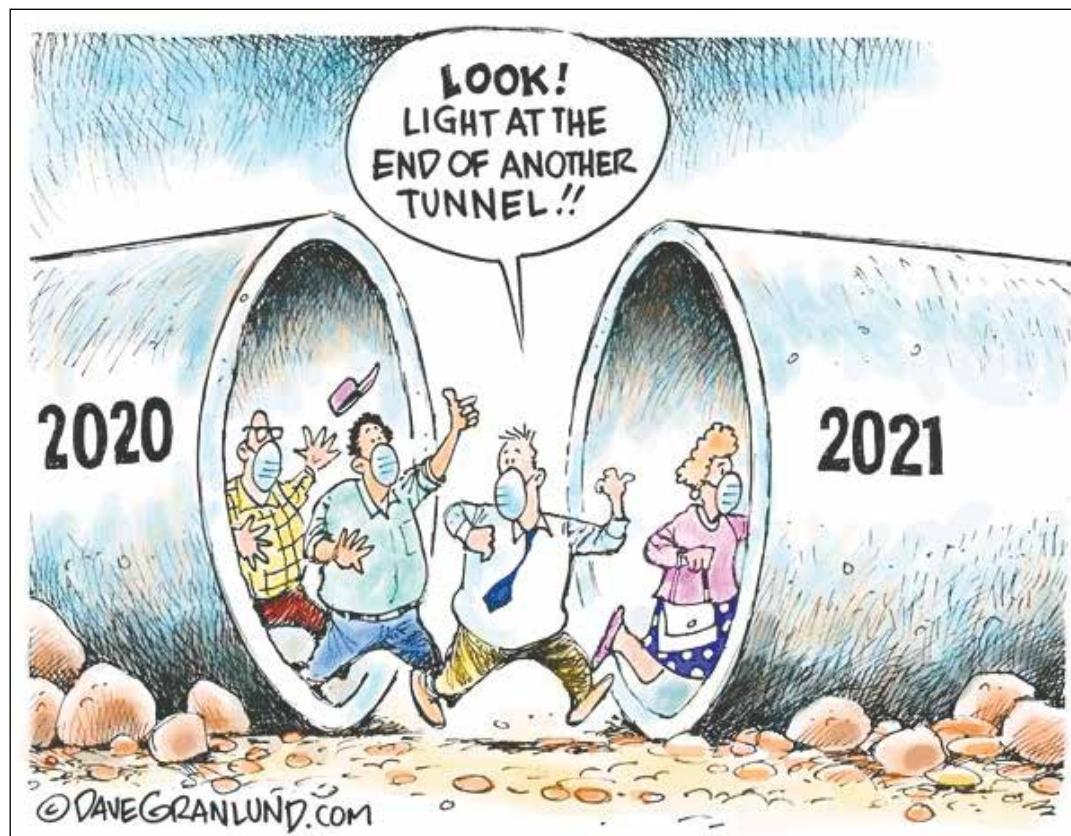
The U.S. Constitution was signed into law by the delegates of the Constitutional Convention in September of 1787. It structured the federal government, explained the essential laws of the country and guaranteed basic rights for every citizen.

But it was not the first American Constitution. That inaugural document was written and adopted on Jan. 14, 1639, by the settlers from the original Massachusetts Bay Colony, who had migrated to the Connecticut River Valley. It was known as the Fundamental Orders.

According to History.com, "Roger Ludlow, a lawyer, wrote much of the Fundamental Orders, and presented a binding and compact frame of government that put the welfare of the community above that of individuals. It was also the first written constitution in the world to declare the modern idea that 'the foundation of authority is in the free consent of the people.' In 1662, the Charter of Connecticut superseded the Fundamental Orders, though the majority of the original document's laws and statutes remained in force until 1818."

For more information, the Grateful American Book Prize recommends A. Chamberlain's "The First Constitution Of Connecticut: The Fundamental Orders."

History Matters A biweekly column courtesy of The Grateful American Book Prize, which shows the nation's children that their past is prelude to their future.



### Letters to the Editor

#### Thank you for donations

##### Dear Editor,

On Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020, the GFWC Agawam Junior Women's Club delivered grocery and Old Navy gift cards to 16 families (with 38 children), 5 senior citizens, and gift bags of essentials to seniors.

On behalf of our club, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to those who helped us spread this holiday cheer to our less fortunate neighbors this year.

Those who made monetary donations include: Easthampton Savings Bank, Mr. & Mrs.

George Bitzas, Agawam Police Association, Agawam Firefighters, Agawam Police Supervisors, and Mayor Sapelli.

Those who sponsored the families and seniors: AJWC club members, Stephanie and Dave Bertagnoli, Liz and John Taylor, Tai Maniscalcho, Carolyn Kozlak, Melissa Lemanski, Danielle Beaudry, Vicki Colwell, Anna Mineo, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Crawford, Ms. Lindsey & Mrs. Debbie Suprenant, and Mr. & Mrs. Carmine Mineo.

Many thanks also to Geissler's Supermarket for their generous

discount towards the purchase of gift cards for each of the recipients.

Also, we would like to thank Natalia Clifton, Susan Godfrey, Julie LaBarre, Lynne Merceri and Donna Shibley for the delivery of all gift cards to the families and seniors as well as the delivery of the essential bags to the seniors.

We could not have done it without you!

Sincerely,  
**Lynne Merceri and Donna Shibley AJWC Holiday Baskets Co-Chairs**

### All-America Selections for 2021 named

**W**ith the holidays behind us it's time for a pick-me-up. Nothing cheers me more than dreaming about my next garden. I love the early planning stage most of all and it starts about this time each year. Seed catalogs begin to arrive in the mail and the glossy photos and "flowery" dialogue lure me to open the pages and curl up with a notebook and a warm cup of tea. I began this yearly ritual over three decades ago and it never grows old. Perhaps you are a like-minded soul who also thinks this is a good way to pass a cold winter evening.

When perusing the catalog, no doubt you will come across the All-America Selections badge of honor next to certain flower, herb, perennial or vegetable varieties. What exactly does it mean to be an AAS winner? You'll be glad to learn more about this trusted organization and what receiving its award means for your garden.

For the last 88 years, the distinction of All-America Selection has been bestowed on new, worthy cultivars of our favorite plants. They are awarded this honor after thorough testing at independent trial grounds throughout North America, with the nonprofit organization's motto being "tested nationally and proven locally." AAS judges compare new flower introductions to those that are already on the market, searching for such desirable characteristics as novel flower color and form, fragrance, length of flowering and disease or pest tolerances or resistance. Vegetables are evaluated similarly, with judges contrasting uniformity, ease of growth, harvest-time and disease tolerance and more with already established varieties. After assessing the plants throughout the growing season scores are tabulated and those with the highest average are considered to be worthy of an AAS award. Let's learn more about two of this year's winners.

Celosia Kelos Candela Pink is a 2021 AAS flower winner. For those of you who know and love plumed celosia, this is your pick. Judges touted this plant as an "Energizer Bunny" bloom-wise. Foot tall bright

deep pink flower spikes rise above foliage that tops off just under two and a half feet tall. Flowers are long-lasting and unlike some celosia, keep their color throughout the season. Judges agree that Kelos Candela Pink is great filler for mixed containers, adding height and textural interest but it also succeeds as a landscape plant either in mass plantings or borders. Reportedly it also dries well too, although I will believe it when I try it for myself since most celosia are prone to shattering. This AAS winner is available in plant form only.

Another winner that I am very excited about is Zinnia Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor. This new addition to the ever-popular floriferous and disease resistant 'Profusion' series starts out with a vibrant red center surrounded by golden yellow petals only to transform into shades of pink, apricot and salmon as it ages. Perhaps the next best attribute of this winner after its alter color ego is that it maintains a compact size of about a foot tall. This winner is versatile, too, succeeding in containers, hanging baskets, mixed plantings and en masse. Another bonus: pollinators love it! Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor is also the recipient of the Fleuroselect Gold Medal award for performance in European trials.

Because testing is local, I feel confident when I purchase plants or seeds of past or present AAS winners and with proper care they should live up to their description in my own garden. For more information and a full list of winners past and present, log on to [www.all-americaselections.org](http://www.all-americaselections.org). Here you will find many steady Eddies of the garden world.

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [ekennedy@turley.com](mailto:ekennedy@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*



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# Health Tips for 2021: Baystate Health doctors weigh in on what's good for you

SPRINGFIELD – Now that a stressful 2020 has come to an end, there are many ways to make 2021 healthy and safe for you and your family.

Doctors at Baystate Health suggest setting realistic goals and prioritizing what is most important to you, taking small steps, and remembering not to beat yourself up if you encounter a setback in your health goals for 2021.

Some healthy goals to consider as you continue on your journey to good health are:

- Make A Plan for Good Overall Health – While weight loss, health screenings and stress reduction are among some of the best ways to achieve and maintain better health, creating a plan that is manageable is the key to success. Look at the new year as a time to set small, attainable goals that you can maintain throughout the year, that will also lead to long term success and better health.

Now is a great time to make an appointment for an annual exam and include your physician in your health goals for the year. For those who don't have a primary care provider, the best time to choose a doctor is before you need one. Over time, your health care needs may change or you may face a new health challenge. The relationship you have with your healthcare

provider, who knows you and your medical history, can lead to a better overall outcome that will protect your health. Also, as the global telemedicine trend continues, especially with the advent of COVID-19, it provides a fast and convenient way for you to connect with your doctor for urgent needs such as fever, cough, and skin rash, as well as management of chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Whether you want to lose weight, quit smoking, or reduce stress, your healthcare provider can suggest additional resources such as support groups, reading material, or if appropriate, medications or aids that can help. Getting advice from your primary care provider and support from friends and family is a great way to keep your New Year's health resolutions going all year long.

— Dr. Linda Schoonover, Baystate Primary Care at Baystate Wing Hospital

- Don't Allow Sleep Problems To Affect Your Health – The COVID-19 pandemic has led to more sleep problems at a time when sleep is especially important for health and well-being. Good quality sleep is important for preventing infections and keeping your immune system working well.

Studies have shown that sleep deprived people don't mount the same immune response after vaccinations as good sleepers, so it is important to make sure you get a good night's sleep prior to getting a flu or COVID vaccine. A recent study published in the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine by Baystate Health's Dr. Eva Mok showed increased rates of flu in patients with untreated sleep apnea. So, getting good quality sleep is just as important as getting enough sleep. If you are having difficulty sleeping or signs of poor-quality sleep with loud snoring, difficulty staying asleep, urinating frequently at night or daytime sleepiness or tiredness, you may benefit from a sleep medicine evaluation.

— Dr. Karin Johnson, medical director, Baystate Health Regional Sleep Program and Baystate Medical Center Sleep Laboratory

- Get Vaccinated – With all the attention on with the COVID-19 vaccines, it is not too late to get your flu shot if you haven't received it yet. Flu vaccine was updated this year to match the anticipated cir-

culating strains. If you belong to any of the groups prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, please get it. Both the flu and COVID-19 vaccinations are important means in preventing serious respiratory infections. Beyond the flu and COVID vaccines, it is important to keep up to date on adult immunizations. The protection you have from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time requiring you to get booster shots.

— Dr. Armando Paez, chief, Infectious Disease Division, Baystate Health

- Reducing Your Risks for Cancer – Reducing identified dietary and lifestyle risk factors can help prevent many diseases, including cancer. Don't use tobacco, avoid drinking too much alcohol, increase moderate aerobic exercise to at least 30 minutes daily most days of the week (moderately vigorous walking will do), and if overweight, shed some pounds.

— Dr. Wilson Mertens - vice president and medical director, Cancer Service, chief, Division of Hematology Oncology, Baystate Regional Cancer Program, Baystate Health

- Keeping Kids Healthy – Until everyone gets their COVID-19 vaccines, parents need to model and help their children follow the basic COVID-19 safety guidelines of mask wearing, handwashing, social distancing, and avoiding indoor gatherings with anyone who is not in your close family pod. Parents need to keep their children healthy by keeping up with their regular visits with their pediatricians to monitor their growth, development, general overall health, to give them any needed vaccines to prevent serious infections, and to keep up with medications for common conditions such as asthma.

During stressful times, parents need to be very aware of their children's mental health, checking in with older children on a daily basis about how they are doing, and watching for any signs of depression and anxiety related to the pandemic and social isolation. Also, during the pandemic there are 3 basic tasks for parents.

1. Tell your children that you love them and show them that love throughout the day in a multitude of ways.

2. Tell your children that you will do the best you can to keep them safe during the pandemic, and demonstrate that by modeling mask wearing, handwashing, social distancing and avoiding indoor gatherings with people who are not in your close family.

3. Tell your children that whatever happens during the pandemic you will work together as a family to overcome any difficulties. Modeling resiliency will teach your children the skills that they will need to overcome the difficult problems they may face as they grow older. Pediatricians are here to help patients and families through these difficult times, and parents can reach out to their pediatricians with any concerns about their children.

— Dr. John O'Reilly, chief, General Pediatrics, Baystate Children's Hospital

- Reducing Your Risk for Diabetes – Over 34 million Americans have diabetes and 88

million American adults – approximately one in three – have prediabetes.

Prediabetes puts you at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes and also increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. By modifying your risk factors and adopting a healthy lifestyle – from eating more nutritious foods and limiting your portions to exercising to maintain an appropriate weight – you can help delay or prevent some of the serious complications of diabetes such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney damage and limb amputations. Aside from reducing your risks for diabetes, if you want to maintain good health in 2021 and beyond, consider if you are overweight eating 20% less which can lead to slow sustained weight loss over time; fit in exercise, even 10 minutes at a time which can lead to significant physical and mental health benefits; addressing your mental health which can be the primary barrier to a healthier you.

Also, quit smoking, this is the best decision you can make for your health.

— Dr. Chelsea Gordner, director, Baystate Inpatient Diabetes Service, Departments of Adult and Pediatric Diabetes at Baystate Medical Center and Baystate Children's Hospital

- Good Mental Health – There are many ways to improve your mental health. Consider getting outdoors for walks in nature, ideally with others (socially distanced and masked). Find opportunities to be kind. Even though many of us are hurting in various ways nowadays, it's not unlikely that there are others who are hurting even more. It's important to remember that we all have things to give: attention, compassion, listening, forgiveness, it doesn't have to be material. Giving feels good year round, much better than receiving.

Also, be kind to yourself: treat your body well by eating healthy food and not overwhelming it with unhealthy substances such as too much alcohol, sugar, and more; don't be mean and punitive towards yourself, if you notice mistakes you've made or things you don't like about yourself – acknowledge them and make a commitment to change, make a plan to change, and get started.

— Dr. Barry Sarvet, chair, Department of Psychiatry, Baystate Health

- Women's Health – Annual preventive exams are vital in detecting conditions like breast cancer or cervical dysplasia at an early, manageable, and treatable stage. The well-woman visit is a perfect time to address bothersome symptoms, set health

goals and learn updates on disease prevention. Checking in annually with an established provider supports a trusted relationship which facilitates seamless care if a medical problem arises.

— Dr. Julie Thompson, FACOG, IFMCP, chief, Obstetrics, Baystate Franklin Medical Center and Pioneer Women's Health

- When Emergencies Happen – My health tip for the new year is one that will come in handy for a lifetime. I often get the question: "When should I go to the Emergency Department compared to Urgent Care?"

It's not really a simple answer, but a good rule of thumb when any new, acute, severe, uncontrolled symptoms need to be addressed in the Emergency Department. For example, if you are having the worst headache of your life or experiencing any new acute severe shortness of breath, chest pain or abdominal pain, you should go to the Emergency Department. If you are having any bleeding from an injury that is not under control with simple first aid measures, that also belongs in the ED. If you are experiencing any new neurologic symptoms or new seizures/convulsions, that also needs to be attended to in the ED.

Anytime there is a loss of consciousness from any cause, that should also be evaluated in the ED. Urgent Care is an ideal locale for the care of minor injuries and ailments like coughs, colds, earaches, urinary tract infections, insect bites and stings. Urgent Care is also appropriate for acute flare-ups of chronic conditions such as migraine headaches, asthma, gout, and eczema.

Most urgent care centers have on-site x-rays and can take care of acute fractures and other minor traumas. It is also important to know during the current pandemic that you should not be afraid to go to the ED with any new acute severe symptoms as all hospitals have protocols in place to protect patients and their families from potential exposure to COVID-19. Trying to "tough it out at home" can be a fatal mistake if it's an acute heart attack or stroke.

— Dr. Brian P. Sutton, FACEP, medical director, Baystate Health Urgent Care

For more information on Baystate Health, visit [Baystatehealth.org](http://Baystatehealth.org).



Dr. Julie Thompson



Dr. Armando Paez



Dr. Wilson Mertens



Dr. Barry Sarvet



Dr. Brian Sutton

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# Public Notices

**AGAWAM ZONING  
BOARD OF APPEALS  
LEGAL  
ADVERTISEMENT  
LEGAL NOTICE**

Date: December 18, 2020

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing via Zoom on **Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:30PM** for all parties interested in the request of Andrew Felix, who is seeking a Variance from the Town of Agawam's Zoning Ordinances, Chapter 180, Paragraph 27 to allow for the construction of a single family home on a lot with less than the required frontage and area at the premises identified as 0 Prospect Street.

Doreen A. Prouty  
Chairperson, ZBA

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82128082145?pwd=RlIwd3ZOU0k0ckZVZWx4eT-NpdFF2Zz09>

**Meeting ID:** 821 2808 2145

**Passcode:** 624093

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US (New York)

12/31/2020, 01/07/2021

**LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF AGAWAM  
PLANNING BOARD**

The Agawam Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 6:00 PM** to hear the petition of Agawam Mayor William P. Sapelli on a proposed Zoning Amendment to Chapter 180 Section 2 and Chapter 180 Section 8 entitled "Fences". Due to the COVID -19 restrictions, the meeting will be held remotely through Zoom at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83405732504?pwd=Vm-lsQmF2a3hDempJRIJIY3dz-dEc4dz09>

**Webinar ID:** 834 0573 2504

**Passcode:** 009513.

Copies of the proposal can be obtained from the Agawam Planning Office at pkerr@agawam.ma.us

**BY ORDER OF:**  
Mark R. Paleologopoulos,  
Chairman  
Agawam Planning Board  
10/7, 1/14/21

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**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Docket No. HD20P2114GD**

**In the matter of:  
Loretta Kenz formerly of  
Agawam, MA  
Now Of: Worcester, MA  
RESPONDENT  
Alleged Incapacitated  
Person  
CITATION GIVING  
NOTICE OF PETITION  
FOR APPOINTMENT OF  
GUARDIAN FOR  
INCAPACITATED  
PERSON PURSUANT TO  
G.L. c. 190B, §5-304**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Jean Dempsey** of Fairfield, PA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Loretta Kenz** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Jean Dempsey** of Fairfield, PA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated; that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

**You have the right to object to this proceeding.**

If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before **10:00 A.M. on the return date of 01/27/2021**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

**WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: December 30, 2020  
**Suzanne T. Seguin**  
Register of Probate  
1/07/2021

**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758**

**Docket No. HD20C0174CA  
In the matter of:  
Sarah Ann Krafick  
CITATION ON PETITION  
TO CHANGE NAME**

**A Petition to Change Name of Adult** has been filed by **Sarah Ann Krafick** of Agawam, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

**Sarah Ann Vazquez  
IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/19/2021**.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

**WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 21, 2020  
**Suzanne T. Seguin**  
Register of Probate  
01/07/2021

**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758**

**Docket No. HD20A0076AD  
CITATION  
G.L.c. 210, § 6**

**In the matter of:  
Aubrey Alivia Parizo**

To: any unnamed or unknown parent and persons interested in a petition for the adoption of said child and to the Department of Children and Families of said Commonwealth.

A petition has been presented to said court by:

**Ryan Greolis of  
Agawam, MA**

**Amanda Agosto of  
Agawam, MA**

requesting for leave to adopt said child and that the name of the child be changed to

**Aubrey Alivia Greolis  
If you object to this**

**adoption you are entitled to the appointment of an attorney if you are an indigent person.** An indigent person is defined by SJC Rule 3:10. The definition includes but is not limited to persons receiving TAFDC, EACDC, poverty related veteran's benefits, Medicaid, and SSI. The Court will determine if you are indigent. Contact an Assistant Judicial Case Manager or Adoption Clerk of the Court on or before the date listed below to obtain the necessary forms.

**IF YOU DESIRE TO OBJECT THERETO, YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY MUST FILE A WRITTEN APPEARANCE IN SAID COURT AT: Springfield ON OR BEFORE TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING (10:00 AM) ON: 01/27/2021**

**WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 9, 2020  
**Suzanne T. Seguin**  
Register of Probate  
12/24, 12/31/2020, 1/07/2021

**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758**

**Docket No. HD20P2156EA  
Estate of: Louise F Strong**

**Also known as:  
Louise F Lafleur  
Date of Death: 11/05/2020**

**CITATION ON  
PETITION FOR  
FORMAL  
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:  
**A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Monique Hoznor**

**WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 23, 2020  
**Suzanne T. Seguin**  
Register of Probate  
01/07/2021

**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758**

**Docket No. HD20C0196CA  
In the matter of:  
Juanita Ann Alicea a.k.a.  
Juanita Ann Carattini a.k.a.  
Juanita Ann Gomez**

**CITATION ON PETITION  
TO CHANGE NAME**

**A Petition to Change Name of Adult** has been filed by **Juanita Ann Alicea a.k.a. Juanita Ann Carattini a.k.a. Juanita Ann Gomez of Feeding Hills, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

**Juanita Ann Alicea  
IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/27/2021**.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding.

**WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 31, 2020  
**Suzanne T. Seguin**  
Register of Probate  
01/07/2021



## How to submit legal notices

All legal notices to be published in the Agawam Advertiser News should be sent directly to [notices@turley.com](mailto:notices@turley.com). Please indicate the newspapers and publication date(s) for the notice(s) in the subject line of your email. For questions regarding coverage area, procedures or cost, please call Jamie Joslyn directly at 413-283-8393, ext. 216.

Turley Publications Inc. publishes 15 weekly newspapers throughout Western Massachusetts. Visit [www.turley.com](http://www.turley.com) for more information.

**Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling).**

**Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.**

# WE'VE EXPANDED OUR WEB SITE PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

1

Email all notices to [notices@turley.com](mailto:notices@turley.com)

2

Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.

3

Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit [www.publicnotices.turley.com](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)

# Schools

# Agawam High School Counseling Bulletin

## Reminders:

Members of the Class of 2021 should familiarize themselves with the information that has been posted to the Post-Secondary Planning section under the Counseling tab of the High School webpage. Most recently, the Senior College Application Packet was added, which is a great resource for students interested in applying to two- and four-year colleges. [https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/937652/Senior\\_Application\\_Packet\\_2020-2021.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/937652/Senior_Application_Packet_2020-2021.pdf)

The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty among students and families about nearly all aspects of the college admission process, including the role of standardized testing. We were scheduled to host testing in November, but did not feel it was prudent to have students from "red" area and states in our building. We looked into hosting school day testing for just Agawam students, but the next available date is in March. Due to the cancellation of SAT and ACT testing dates, more than 1,630 US colleges and universities announced they are moving to a test-optional policy, and more will surely follow. By going test-optional, institutions are making a definitive statement that they will not need test scores to make admission decisions this year. Despite the change in policies, high school students and their parents are asking, "Does test optional really mean test optional?" The answer, simply put, is: Yes.

Please keep in mind that some colleges may require SAT or ACT scores for certain majors and/or the awarding of merit money. We encourage you to contact any schools that are of interest to you (website, email, or phone) to confirm that test scores are not required for your intended major and/or the awarding of merit money.

All students should be checking their Naviance accounts on a regular basis. There is so much valuable information for all students, whether you're headed directly into the work force, the military, or college upon graduation from AHS. If you can't access your account, please be in touch with your School Counselor.

## Open Houses/Informational Sessions/Discovery Days:

Colleges and universities will be hosting information and recruitment events, in a variety of formats, in the next couple of months. Check the colleges' websites for more information and to confirm the date and time of the event. While campus visits may look and feel different during this time, it is important to take advantage of these programs to learn as much as you can about the schools that are of interest to you.

The Horace Smith Fund will be hosting two online information meetings for students and parents regarding the Walter S. Barr Scholarships and the William R. Rooney Award. Information on these awards is listed in the Scholarship section below. These will be held on Monday, Jan. 11 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 24 at 2:00 p.m. To reserve a space, interested people must email [info@HoraceSmithFund.org](mailto:info@HoraceSmithFund.org). A link for pre-registration will be sent.

## Scholarship Information:

See your counselor or visit the websites below for more information or an application.

The 2020 Profile in Courage Essay will be offering a first place prize of \$10,000, a second place prize of \$3,000, and \$1,000 for five finalists. The maximum word count is 1,000 with a minimum of 700, not including citations and bibliographies. The deadline is Jan. 15, 2021. More information is available at [jfklibrary.org/essaycontest](http://jfklibrary.org/essaycontest)

Berkshire Bank's NeXt Gen Scholarship Program is now accepting applications for the 2020-2021 cycle. Through the program, 40 students will receive a \$2500 scholarship. These will be awarded to students who have exemplified community service through their volunteer efforts, have been successful academically, and have financial need. The application deadline is Jan. 31,

2021. Learn more at [berkshirebank.com/scholarships](http://berkshirebank.com/scholarships)

The Beverly J. Malone Ladizki and David A. Ladizki Scholarship is available for graduating high school seniors residing in Agawam with a minimum 3.0 GPA. Applicants must be scheduled to be a full-time student at a non-profit college/university, community college, or vocational school after graduation. The awards range from \$1,000-\$3,000. To apply, please visit [hfpg.org/scholarships](http://hfpg.org/scholarships), scroll to select the type of college you will attend, click on "Individual Scholarship Funds at HFPG", and then click on the link to access the Foundation's online portal. Applications must be submitted by Feb. 1, 2021.

The Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholarship application is now available! This foundation provides four-year scholarships of \$30,000 and extensive support services, including guidance and internship placement, to highly motivated African American students. The application closes at 5 p.m. on Feb. 1, 2021. Learn more at [jackierobinson.org](http://jackierobinson.org)

Big Y Scholarship applications will be accepted through Feb. 1, 2021. The program awards over 300 scholarships each year, totaling more than \$250,000. All Big Y Scholarships recognize academic merit and achievement. Applications are available only online at [bigy.com](http://bigy.com).

Tenaska, founded in 1987, is a privately held energy company committed to being good neighbors in the communities where its plants are located. To express that commitment, scholarships are offered through the high schools located in the counties with plant operations (Berkshire Power Company in our area). Applicants must be a 2021 graduating high school senior who plan to attend a two- or four-year post-secondary education program at an accredited institution. The scholarship amount is \$1500, and applications, which are available at [Tenaska.com/scholarship-form](http://Tenaska.com/scholarship-form), are due no later than Feb. 12, 2021.

The Yawkey Scholars Program is designed to make college affordable for talented and motivated students from Massachusetts. It provides a four-year renewable tuition scholarship to a Massachusetts private college to help students achieve academically and go on to be successful and highly productive members of our community. Students must meet specific financial guidelines to be eligible. Applications, which are due by 5 p.m. on Feb. 12, 2021, are available at [yawkeyfoundation.org/how-we-give/yawkey-scholars-program](http://yawkeyfoundation.org/how-we-give/yawkey-scholars-program).

The William R. Rooney Scholarship is available to residents of Hampden County who are members of the senior class and have been on an IEP or 504 Plan for two years. Please visit [horacesmithfund.org](http://horacesmithfund.org) for an application. The application deadline is March 15, 2021.

The Walter S. Barr Scholarship is available to residents of Hampden County who are members of the senior class at their local public or private secondary schools. Awards will be made on the basis of all available information, including school records, recommendations and examination scores. Awards will be continued through the four-year course if the student's record and need justify such continuance. Consideration will be given to both the merit and financial need of the applicant. Please see [horacesmithfund.org](http://horacesmithfund.org) for details. The application deadline is March 15, 2021.

The Professional Women in Construction (PWC) – CT Chapter is pleased to offer multiple scholarships to students (male or female) enrolled in undergraduate or graduate degree programs in Construction, Construction Management, Interior Design, Architecture, Landscape Design, or Civil, Mechanical, Structural, and Electrical Engineering. The students must be enrolled full-time for the complete year. The application is available at [pwcusa.org/chapters/about-connecticut/connecticut-scholarship/](http://pwcusa.org/chapters/about-connecticut/connecticut-scholarship/) and is due no later than March 17, 2021.

The Asian Pacific Community Fund (APCF) has multiple scholarship awards

to give to eligible high school seniors. The application on the website is not yet open, but is expected to go live on November 20. Applications are due no later than Friday, April 2, 2021. More information is available at [apcf.org/scholarships](http://apcf.org/scholarships)

The American College Foundation (ACF) is offering a Visionary Scholarship, with multiple winners selected to each receive between \$1,000 and \$5,000. The application process is quick and easy and financial need is not considered. All may apply. The application is available at [AmericanCollegeFoundation.org](http://AmericanCollegeFoundation.org) and the deadline is May 1, 2021.

The Disabled American Veterans Chapter 11, Ted Hamel Memorial Scholarship application is now available. Applicants must be a current DAV member or related to a current DAV members, such as son, daughter, grandchild, great-grandchild, nephew or niece. You must also be a high school senior or DAV member accepted to a college, trade, vocational, or technical school. You will need to have your sponsor's name, signature, and DAV membership number. Applicants from previous years may apply each year as they proceed

through their education. Applications are available in Naviance and are due by May 1, 2021.

The Wisegeek Entrepreneurship Matters Scholarship is a \$500 scholarship open to students with an entrepreneurial spirit. While not required, the program will look for candidates with a track record of overcoming challenges and a penchant for continuous growth. Applications can be completed in less than two minutes and are due by May 1, 2021.

[wise-geek.com/entrepreneurship-matters-scholarship.htm](http://wise-geek.com/entrepreneurship-matters-scholarship.htm)

The creators of the "Student Award Search Aid" website are offering the B. Davis Scholarship for 2021. Please visit [studentawardsearch.com/scholarships.htm](http://studentawardsearch.com/scholarships.htm) to read about the program and to apply for the scholarship. The amount of the award is \$1,000 and the deadline is May 24, 2021.

Applications for the WiseGeek LGBTQ+ Scholarship are now available. Students who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ Awareness community can apply for this \$500 scholarship (deadline of July 1, 2021) at [wisegeek.com/lgbtq-awareness-scholarship.htm](http://wisegeek.com/lgbtq-awareness-scholarship.htm)

## Registration date changed for night school

AGAWAM – In case of an increase of COVID cases after the holiday break and in an abundance of precaution, the Agawam Night School registration dates and calendar have changed.

Registration for Night school is now Tuesday, March 16 and Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

If the number of COVID cases have significantly resided and if it is approved by the Agawam Health Department and our Superintendent, Mrs. Sheila Hoffman, our Adult Education

Program will not be remote. The first day of classes would be March 23, 2021 and the last class would be June 3, 2021. Classes will run on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.

If we are not able to have classes at high school and it is scheduled as remote the start and end date will remain the same. Remote classes are self-driven. Students will be required to complete 30 hours and pass the course with a 65 or better.

## Elms College announces plan for spring 2021 semester

CHICOPEE – As it successfully concludes its on-campus plan for the fall semester, College of Our Lady of the Elms announced that the spring 2021 semester will continue to follow the hybrid ElmsFlex model.

Due to the campus community's successful efforts under the ElmsSafe health and safety protocols, the college was able to complete the in-person portion of the fall semester as planned with students on campus until the Thanksgiving break. The remainder of the fall semester will be taught remotely.

"I continue to be inspired by and grateful for the way our students, faculty, and staff have come together to protect each other both inside and outside of the classroom since we reopened our campus in August," said Harry E. Dumay Ph.D., MBA, president of Elms College. "All the measures included in our ElmsSafe plan – wearing masks, social distancing, practicing enhanced hygiene, testing, contact tracing, quarantining and isolating as needed – have allowed us to foster a vibrant and nurturing learning environment for students that will extend into the spring 2021 semester."

Spring classes, which will start on Jan. 26, 2021 and end on May 7, will continue to be taught in the hybrid ElmsFlex model, which gives students the option of attending sessions in the classroom, synchronously online, or a combination of

both. Under the ElmsFlex model, students can move between the options based on their personal preferences and individual circumstances in order to continue their coursework.

Residence halls will be open with single-room assignments and students will receive designated days in January to return to or move into, their on-campus rooms.

COVID-19 testing will be required for all students, faculty and staff prior to being allowed back on campus in January. Also, throughout the semester, all students, faculty, staff and visitors coming to campus will be required to complete a daily online health survey.

Elms College continues to closely monitor and follow guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and CDC, as well as Gov. Charlie Baker's mandates.

Out of an abundance of caution, classes will be held on Presidents' Day, Feb. 15 and there will be no spring break. Additionally, all domestic and international travel involving study abroad, mission or service trips has been cancelled.

The college is awaiting determinations by the New England Collegiate Conference and the NCAA as to whether competitive sports will be held in the spring.

For more information on Elms College's spring 2021 plan, people may visit [www.elms.edu/elms-safe](http://www.elms.edu/elms-safe).

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## Online Scholarship and Fellowship information meetings

**WESTFIELD** – The Horace Smith Fund, now in its 121st year, has scholarship and fellowship money available for graduates of Hampden County public and private high schools. Two online information meetings are scheduled for Monday, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. for parents and students. To secure an invitation to attend, write info@HoraceSmithFund.org. Each session is about 40 minutes long and will include a question-and-answer period.

Scholarships awards of \$12,000 are distributed as \$3,000 annually and renewable each year until graduation. Fellowship awards of \$15,000 are distributed as \$5,000 annually and renewable for two additional years. Students must maintain at least a B average in college.

Recipients are selected on a variety of criteria, including financial need, cumulative graduating GPA, extra-curricular activities, recommendations, and college entrance exam scores, if applicable. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance. Additionally, fellowship applicants must also submit their GRE or degree-specific test scores, if applicable. All recipients must be full-time students and residents of Hampden County.

Last year, \$297,000 was awarded to 24 individuals. Scholarships were given to 18 graduating seniors from Hampden County high schools. Three scholarships were also awarded to current college students to assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees. Three fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing graduate degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, located in Springfield. The scholarships and fellowships are named for Walter S. Barr, a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2021. Applications are available online at www.Horace-SmithFund.org or by phoning the office at (413) 739-4222.

## Harmony returns for the new year

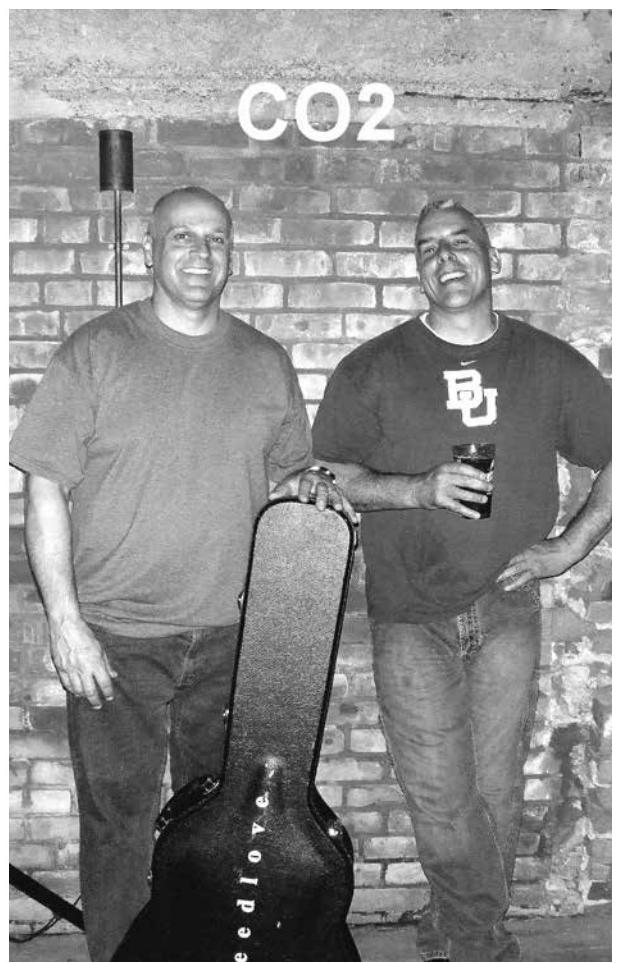
**AGAWAM** – The second half of the seventeenth season of the Agawam Cultural Council's popular Applause Series gets underway on Friday, January 8, 2021 with the return of the captivating acoustic rock duo CO2. A videotaped recording of their January, 2019 Applause Series performance will be presented on the Town of Agawam's public access channel (Agawam TV15) at 7:00 pm and streamed from the "Watch" button on www.agawammedia.tv for those residing outside of Agawam. This performance is also being shown on the Town of Southwick's TV15 at 7pm and streamed from the "Watch Channel 15" button on www.southwickma.org/channel-15-public-access. Those who wish to watch on a smart device at a different time should email r.kadis@comcast.net for a link for the performance.

Vocalist Mike Scott and guitarist/vocalist Mark Wassung, known for beautifully blended harmonies, will perform hits from the Everly Brothers, Simon & Garfunkel, Johnny Cash, Neil Diamond and others. Scott and Wassung have more than 30 years of experience singing and playing guitar in front of audiences. Motivated by the love and enjoyment of music, they have performed together as CO2 at venues throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut. The duo's success continues to grow, and this show will demonstrate the reasons why.

Production sponsors for CO2 are CHH Engraving Promotional Marketing and Kyle and Roberta Miller. The Agawam Cultural Council also thanks the Agawam Special Police, Elaine Carlson, Hampden County Sheriff Nick Coccia, and OMG, Inc. for their generous support as Applause Series season sponsors.

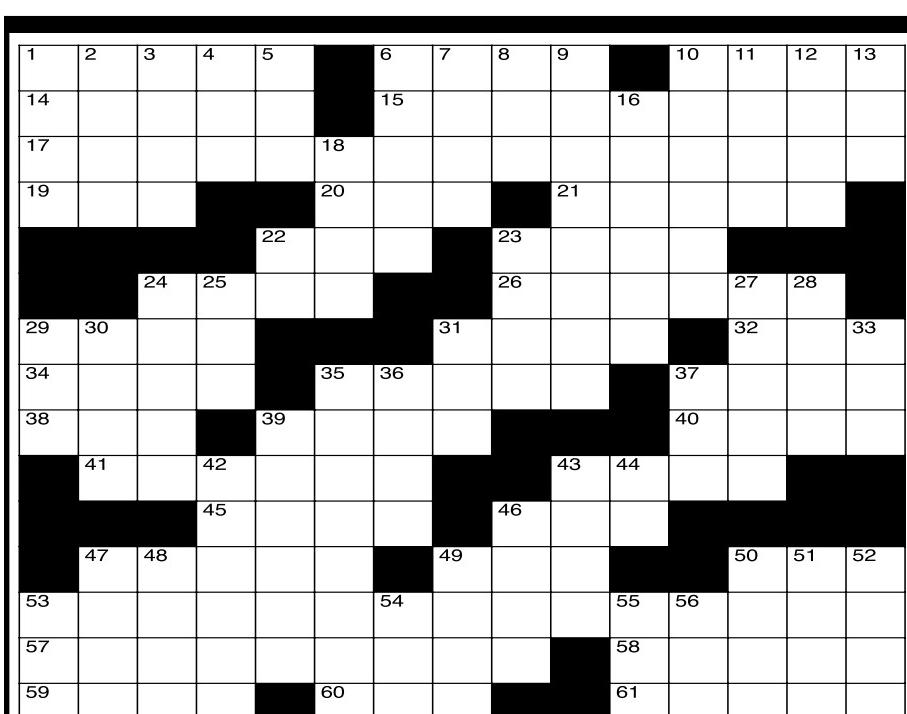
In lieu of the free will donations the Agawam Cultural Council (ACC) normally accepts at the conclusion of all its events, (which support fully 40% of the cost of each performance), the council asks viewers to consider making a properly "socially distanced" donation to support efforts to "Give Back to the Community" by visiting the ACC web site www.agawamcc.org and clicking on the green "Donate" button. A check in any amount, payable to the Agawam Cultural Council, may also be sent to: Agawam Cultural Council, Town Hall, 36 Main Street, Agawam MA 01001.

For more information on the activities and virtual offerings of the Agawam Cultural Council during the stay-at-home order, please visit their web site, www.agawamcc.org. The Agawam Cultural Council is an all-volunteer local partner of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state



Acoustic rock duo CO2 will ring in the new year as part of the Agawam Cultural Council's popular Applause Series on Friday, January 8, 2021. Mike Scott and Mark Wassung's beautifully blended harmonies will be broadcast on the Town of Agawam's public access channel and streamed at 7 p.m. SUBMITTED PHOTO

agency, and is funded, in part, by the MCC. The ACC is charged with bringing engaging, entertaining, and educational events and opportunities in the arts, humanities, and sciences, to children and adults from Agawam and the surrounding communities.



### CLUES ACROSS

- Partner to "oohed"
- Relaxing places
- Humorous monologue
- Simple elegance
- Bearable
- Disobedience
- Express delight
- Gov't attorneys
- Wake up
- A type of band
- Remain as is
- Turfs
- Battle-ax
- Volcanic crater
- The mother of Jesus
- One's life history
- "Rule, Britannia" composer
- Doubles
- Jacob \_\_ American journalist
- House pet
- S. African river
- Broad sashes

### CLUES DOWN

- Currency exchange charge
- River in Tuscany
- Breakfast dish
- Defunct European currency
- Establish as a foundation
- KGB double agent Aldrich \_\_
- Part of a book
- Taxi
- Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
- Train group (abbr.)
- Frames per second
- Have surgery
- Formal withdrawal from a federation
- Guitarist sounds
- Greek war god
- 2,000 lbs.
- Helps escape
- Currency exchange charge
- River in Tuscany
- Breakfast dish
- Defunct European currency
- Naturally occurring solid material
- Acquired brain injury behavior science (abbr.)
- Thirteen
- Partner to cheese

### CLUES ACROSS

- Upper class young woman
- Part of a purse Aldrich \_\_
- Self-contained units
- Boxing's GOAT
- Legislators
- Flightless birds
- U. of Miami's mascot is one
- Floating ice
- Low, marshy land
- Seldom
- Lyric poems
- Law enforcement agency (abbr.)
- Full extent of something
- Claus
- Naturally occurring solid material
- Acquired brain injury behavior science (abbr.)
- Thirteen
- Partner to cheese
- Member of a Semitic people
- One thousandth of an inch
- Former CIA
- Most lemony
- Engage in
- Small Eurasian deer
- Provisions
- All humans have them
- Swiss river
- Storage term (abbr.)
- Famed Broadway lyricist Sammy
- Dutch colonist
- Full-grown pike fish
- Egyptian sun god
- Flute
- Flew off!
- Scottish tax
- Young women's association
- Populous Brazilian city
- Malaysian Isthmus
- Pointed end of a pen

## AAA offers tips for securing Christmas tree in vehicle

This year, millions of Americans will flock to tree lots across the country in search of the perfect Christmas tree. While finding just the right one may seem like the hard part getting it home safely is where the real challenge begins.

Just like moving furniture, appliances or other large objects, transporting a tree is no different. If not properly secured, a tree can cause vehicle damage such as scratched paint, torn door seals or distorted window frames. Even worse, it could fly off or out of the vehicle and become a danger to other drivers. In fact, a 2019 survey from AAA found that 44% of Americans, who planned to purchase a real Christmas tree that year would use unsafe methods when transporting it home such as not using the roof rack or placing it in the bed of a pickup truck unsecured.

Losing a Christmas tree on the drive home would no doubt put a damper on the holiday season. But, more importantly, a tree that comes loose from a vehicle could also cause an accident. Previous research from AAA found that road debris caused more than 200,000 crashes during a four-year period, resulting in approximately 39,000 injuries and 500 deaths. The roads can be treacherous enough during the holiday season with increased congestion and winter weather conditions without the addition of flying Christmas trees. Luckily with a little preparation, the right tools and the right vehicle transporting a Christmas tree is easy with these tips from AAA:

Do not visit a tree lot if you or anyone from your family has tested positive for COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-related symptoms.

Call the lot ahead of time and ask about their policies for visiting. It is possible they may have reduced operating hours or are limiting the amount of people who can visit the lot at one time. It is also a good idea to ask when they are slow and plan to visit then, when crowds may be smaller.

Although most lots are located outside, it is recommended to wear a face covering

and practice social distancing. Bring hand sanitizer and keep it nearby while shopping.

Make sure to bring strong rope or nylon ratchet straps, an old blanket, gloves and of course the right vehicle. One with a roof rack is ideal, but a pickup truck, SUV, van or minivan can work just as well.

Once you've found the perfect tree, have the lot wrap it in netting before loading it. Loose branches can also be secured with rope or twine to help protect the tree from damage.

Prior to loading the tree, cover the roof with an old blanket to prevent scratches to the paint and protect the car from any damage.

Place the tree on the roof rack or in the bed of the truck with the trunk facing the front of the car. If the vehicle does not have a roof rack and is a SUV, CUV, van or minivan place the tree inside. If not, rent or borrow a pickup truck, a vehicle with a roof rack or one that is large enough to accommodate the tree inside.

Secure the tree at its bottom, center and top using strong rope or nylon ratchet straps. Avoid using the twine offered by many tree lots. Use fixed vehicle tie-down points and loop the rope or strap around the tree trunk above a branch to prevent any side-to-side or front-to-rear movement.

Once tied down, give the tree several strong tugs from various angles to make sure it is secured in place and will not come loose.

Drive slowly and take back roads if possible. Higher speeds can create significant airflow that can damage your tree or challenge even the best tie-down methods.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with 64 offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 5.7 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance and auto-related services.

# Obituary

Peter E. Hanson

1940-2020

Peter "Pete" Edward Hanson, 80, of Feeding Hills MA passed away peacefully on Tuesday, December 29, 2020, at Western Mass Hospital in Westfield MA. Pete was a great man, husband, father and grandfather. His presence blessed everyone who knew him.

Born on June 13, 1940 in Boston MA, Pete grew up in Woburn MA, with his parents, the late Edward and Elizabeth (Fisher) Hanson, and grandmother Gladys "Gar" Fisher. Pete was a graduate of Woburn High in 1957 and learned his work ethic at the family business, Arnold-Fisher Co., in Woburn. He went on to receive his Bachelor's degree in Accounting from UMass Amherst in 1961. There he met his future wife Kathleen "Kay" Godek. Pete and Kay were married in February of 1962.

Pete and Kay started raising their family of four children in Woburn and then moved to Feeding Hills in 1973. Pete's career, as an accountant and a controller, took him from United Shoe to Strathmore Paper and then to Stanley Tools.

Pete's favorite pastime was sports. He loved coaching his kids and enjoyed watching the Red Sox, Patriots, Celtics and Bruins. Pete is probably best known around Agawam MA for his involvement in the "Men's Over 30 Basketball League." He joined the league in the late '70s, formed a team named the "Retreads," and later proudly served as League Commissioner for over 20 years.

Despite his diagnosis of normal pressure hydrocephalus and his mobility challenges, Pete celebrated the joys of life including the weddings of all his children and the births of his eight grandchildren.

Pete is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Kathleen (Godek) Hanson; sister, Carol Hanson of Coquille OR; children, David Hanson and wife Li-Juan of Wellesley MA, Thomas Hanson and wife Ty of Southampton MA, James Hanson and wife Donna of Washington Township NJ, and Karen Jones and husband Paul of Feeding Hills MA; plus eight grandchildren, Isabelle, Sierra, Hunter, Camilla, Amelia, Autumn, Forest and Tyler.

The family would like to extend heartfelt thanks to all of the dedicated and compassionate staff at Western Mass Hospital for taking Pete under their wings and giving him extraordinary care for the past ten years. Pete was best known at WMH for his heartwarming smile that could brighten anyone's day.

Services are entrusted to Colonial Forastiere Funeral Home and will be held privately by the family. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Western Mass Hospital, Recreation Department, 91 East Mountain Road, Westfield MA 01085; please note "Rec. Dept. Donation" in the memo field.

Forever in our hearts.



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# Free COVID-19 testing at HCC extended until March 31



The mobile COVID-19 testing site at HCC will continue operating through March 2021. SUBMITTED PHOTO

HOLYOKE — Free "Stop the Spread" COVID-19 testing at Holyoke Community College has been extended until March 31, 2021, according to the Holyoke Board of Health.

Drive-through testing at HCC is conducted six days a week in parking lot H near the western entrance to the Donahue Building on the college's main campus, 303 Homestead Ave.

HCC has been serving as a "Stop the Spread" drive-through testing site since Aug. 26 to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Drivers are asked to enter the campus from Homestead Avenue, turn left onto the Campus Road and proceed to parking lot H. There will be signs and parking attendants on site to manage the flow of traffic.

The HCC testing site is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.; and Tuesday and Thursday from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Testing is free to all Massachusetts residents, and conducted on a first come, first serve basis. There are no appointments and no referral is necessary. Turnaround time for results is typically four days or fewer.

More information on all of the Stop the Spread test sites across the state can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread>

Please Note: Testing may sometimes be cancelled due to inclement weather. Be sure to visit the Holyoke Board of Health website for up-to-date information on cancellations: <https://www.holyoke.org/departments/board-of-health>

## National Technology and Development Program celebrates 75 years

Since 1945, the USDA Forest Service's National Technology and Development Program has harnessed the latest technological advances to help the agency and its partners solve complex technological problems. As 2020 draws to a close, the Forest Service reflects on 75 years of the program finding innovative and practical ways to better manage public lands, protect resources and save lives.

After the program began during World War II, the Forest Service established "Equipment and Development Centers" in Montana and California, which were tasked with repurposing surplus military equipment and advancing knowledge and techniques to better fight wildfires. These centers pioneered many of the life- and cost-saving advances firefighters use today, such as standardized hoses, pumps, rappelling and parachuting equipment as well as the interagency wildland fire shelter - credited with saving more than 300 lives.

"We create friction and encourage failure," said program director Alex Gavrisheff, referring to the battery of tests the program's staff design to push products beyond their limits. "We fail, so others don't."

The centers' scope eventually expanded to include for-

est management, recreation, engineering and more. The National Technology and Development Program now categorizes its work within three areas: application of innovative science and technology, knowledge synthesis and specifications and standards.

The product specifications developed by the program have saved the Forest Service about \$40 million a year through centralized purchasing and inventory management. Rigorous product testing and consultation with private industry also ensures commercial products can meet the needs and demands of employees doing work on the ground.

The program also maintains an extensive online library (<https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/>) of its findings, and regularly shares its knowledge and collaborates with other national and international government agencies on projects.

"As technology has advanced, so has the scope and depth of the National Technology and Development Program," Gavrisheff said. "It's been an incredible 75 years, and we're excited for what the future holds for technology and how we can bring that to the Forest Service, the land that it cares for and the people it serves."

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# SPORTS

## FOOTBALL

# Football committee mulls tourney options

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – While the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is just hoping to have a regular football season much like the fall and winter modified seasons, the Tournament Management Committee and Football Committee of the MIAA is thinking about life after the pandemic.

The pandemic took away the traditional 2020 fall season and football is supposed to take place during a Fall 2 or “bubble” season, which begins in late February.

However, assumingly, in the fall of 2021, when high schools are seemingly going to be able to play under normal conditions and with a normal schedule that includes tournaments, a new football tournament will be forthcoming.

It seems like long time ago that the member schools of the MIAA voted in favor of dropping the sectional tournaments in favor of one statewide tournament, that in the case of many sports, will include a 32-team bracket with the opportunity to play in if a team finishes with a .500 record.

But in football, a .500 record does not guarantee entrée into the tournament. That has always been the case as Western Massachusetts football teams had a ranking system that put the top four teams in each division in the playoffs. Football also had more

than the four divisions many other sports like soccer and basketball have.

The Football Committee of the MIAA began meeting recently about the issue. One plan was presented by the Massachusetts High School Football Coaches Association.

The plan would have a 10-game, but 12-week regular season concluding on Thanksgiving. In recent years, the regular season was ended after eight games, with qualifying teams playing playoff games in weeks 9 and 10, the state semifinals between Week 10 and Thanksgiving, and Thanksgiving Day’s game a simple exhibition. In a lot of cases, teams qualifying for state final games would not play regulars on Thanksgiving to guarantee health in the state finals.

The coaches’ association proposal would restore Thanksgiving as a regular season game. The association also submitted a plan for a nine-game schedule with playoffs starting before Thanksgiving and finishing after as it is currently constituted.

A group of Eastern Mass. coaches and athletic directors have also developed seven and eight-game proposals that would entail having 16 teams qualifying for a state tournament in each division under the seven game, and eight teams per division in the eight-game season. Under both proposals the state finals would

FOOTBALL | page 11



Options for a new football playoff format, which will feature a statewide tournament beginning in the fall, are being considered.  
FILE PHOTO

## RACING

# Thompson to hold virtual race series

THOMPSON, Conn. -- Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park will come to virtual life three times during the winter months, as a new iRacing series will give drivers and fans a chance to prepare for the 2021 season. In a series promoted by Souza Media, full-time Modified, Late Model & Super Late Model drivers from across New England will compete in three different races -- including the virtual historic Thompson 300 -- with one-race in January, another in February and a final in March.

The series will help preview the real-life season at Thompson for 2021 -- which is slated to begin with the annual Icebreaker weekend from April 9-11, and hold six oval events, promoted by the American Canadian Tour and Pro All Star Series. All three iRacing events will take place on Saturday, Jan. 23, Feb. 20 and March 20 -- and will all begin with the drop of the green flag at 2 p.m. The feature races will air live, in full, on Extreme Sim TV, via Facebook and YouTube. Qualifying heat races, consolation races and a B-Main will be conducted prior to the broadcast start.

The three iRacing events will include an opener with iRacing's SK Modified, previewing the Sunoco Modified season at Thompson, on January 23, for a 100-lap event. The second will put some



**Virtual Thompson iRacing Series**  
Three races previewing 2021

January 23 - SK Modified 100  
February 20 - Late Model 100  
March 20 - Virtual Thompson 300

Must be full-time current or past driver in Modifieds, Super Late Models or Late Models.  
Register: <http://www.souzamedia.com/thompson-racing-series>

A virtual racing series is set to take place later this month. SUBMITTED PHOTO

of New England's best Late Model stars together in ACT-style Late Models for their own 100-lapper on February 20. The final will help promote and preview the return of the historic Thompson 300, as Tour-Type Modifieds are used for a virtual 300-lapper on March 20. In real-life, officials are bringing back the Thompson 300 as part of the Sunoco World Series of Racing at Thompson in October of 2021.

"This iRacing series will give drivers and fans of Thompson Speedway a chance to come together during the cold winter

months for some virtual racing," Kyle Souza, owner of Souza Media, said. "We're looking forward to watching the Thompson 300 in real-life, but we think this virtual experience will showcase some of what it will take to win the real-life event and get fans energized for the October 2021 race."

A maximum of 29 drivers will start each race, in order to keep the car count reasonable on a tight, banked track, and produce green flag racing. Out of the 29 competitors, 28 drivers will qualify through the heats, consis's and

RACING | page 11

## WINTER SEASON

# Winter sports scheduled to begin next week

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – Winter sports are scheduled to get underway next week, with practices beginning on Jan. 11.

Practices were originally scheduled to start on Jan. 4, but the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference made the decision to move back a week, though at this point, it is very unclear how many schools will be participating in the winter season and whether or not those teams will have to further modify schedules.

While the PVIAC wanted to give Western Mass. schools time during the month of December to secure permission to play sports through school committees, health departments, and other public officials, some of those permissions were contingent on the various criteria surrounding current coronavirus cases.

In the case of Holyoke, the city needed to be out of the “red” and no longer labeled a high-risk community by Dec. 24, and remain out of the red for three weeks in order to begin practices on Jan. 11. However, that has not happened.

Additionally, schools like West

Springfield and Belchertown are among those that will not play communities that are red, further complicating the scheduling.

As of the Dec. 31 Department of Public Health report, most town and cities in Western Massachusetts in Hampden and Hampshire County are in the red and considered high-risk as the second surge continues, especially with rising numbers following the holiday season.

Some schools also have agreements with teachers' unions regarding how schools will proceed in the event a community goes into the red. In many cases, a high school's coaching staff is included in the union negotiations.

In one bubble, Agawam, Westfield, and West Springfield all have permission to play, but Hampshire, Holyoke, and Northampton are question marks.

There are also further modifications for the ice hockey schedule as fewer schools have hockey programs in Western Massachusetts. One thing you will not see in the modified winter season is a team like Agawam or Minnechaug making its way to the other side of the state to play other teams in Central and Eastern Mass. Bubble

WINTER | page 6

# Sports

## Pioneers to host Pelham clinic

LUDLOW – Western United Pioneers FC is excited to offer a soccer clinic in Pelham, MA for players in the Massachusetts North Region. The fall clinic provides off-season training and skill development by WUP FC coaches. There are two sessions available. sign up for one or both. It makes a great holiday gift for friends and family members.

This program is offered to boys and girls born in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. The four-week program includes one practice per week for a total of \$65 per session (\$130 for 2 sessions). Sessions will consist of a max of 15 players per field (COVID regulation for the players' safety).

### SESSION 1: MONDAYS 1/11, 1/25, 2/1, & 2/8

Boys and Girls Born 2013 and 2014: Session is at 5 p.m.  
Boys and Girls Born 2010, 2011, and 2012: Session is at 6 p.m.

### SESSION 2: MONDAYS 2/22, 3/1, 3/8, & 3/15

Boys and Girls Born 2013 and 2014: Session is at 5 p.m.  
Boys and Girls Born 2010, 2011, and 2012: Session is at 6 p.m.

The sessions will be held at Pelham Elementary School at 45 Amherst Road, Pelham, MA 01002.

## Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections in the coming weeks, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

## New umpires needed for 2021 season

REGION – The Western Massachusetts Baseball Umpire Association is looking for individuals who are interested in umpiring baseball at the high school and youth level. The WMBUA services high school baseball and various other leagues in the Greater Springfield area/ Hampden County.

The WMBUA's first year members class will be held for roughly five to six weeks, beginning in February. The class dates right now are fluid as the organization monitors what happens with the COVID-19 pandemic. Class is usually one or two nights per week from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The class takes place in the First Baptist Church of East Longmeadow's classrooms at 50 Parker Street. Classes may also be virtual if COVID-19 does not allow for in-person meetings.

If you are interested in taking the classes, contact Chris Mefen, the WMBUA Secretary, via email at cmefen8017@gmail.com or visit the WMBUA website at <http://wmbua.org>.

## RACING ■ from page 10

B-Main sessions, while one provisional is available for a most recent Thompson track champion or Modified, Late Model or Super Late Model champion, if needed. If no champions fail to qualify, the provisional may be used for a promoters option. Qualifying will begin at 10 a.m. on each of the race days, while there will also be multiple practice sessions prior to race day.

In order to be eligible for the events, drivers must fit one of the requirements put in place by officials. Race officials have the final determination on eligibility and may elect to refund participants who register but don't fit qualifications. For all three events, drivers must be:

A current or past full-time weekly competitor in Late Models, Super Late Models or Modifieds

A current or past touring series competitor in Late Models, Super Late Models or Modifieds

Immediate crew member of one of the above drivers -- defined as either a car owner, crew chief or spotter.

\*If all spots are not filled for the event five days prior to event start, fans of Thompson Speedway, Modifieds, Super Late Models or Late Models will be able to register to fill the spots\*

The first 60 entered drivers will be registered for the event. Anyone who registers past that 60 number will be placed on a waitlist. Registration fees are \$15 per event, or \$45 for the entire series. Registration can be completed at [kylesouza.com/thompson-i-racing-series](http://kylesouza.com/thompson-i-racing-series). In order for a registration to be counted as one of 60, payment must be received. Drivers who complete registration will be invited to the league on iRacing directly to confirm their registration has been received.

A payout is guaranteed for the top-five at the end of each race, with a minimum of \$50 to win the feature. The virtual Thompson 300 will pay at least \$125 to win. Sponsorship opportunities for the series are available by emailing [kyle.souza.media@gmail.com](mailto:kyle.souza.media@gmail.com). Sponsorships will include full race deals and contingency awards.

Virtual Thompson Series schedule:

January 23 -- SK Modified -- 100 laps

February 20 -- Late Models -- 100 laps

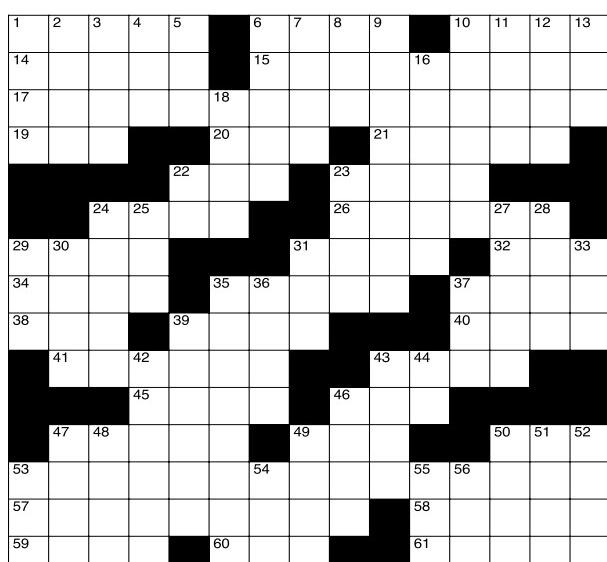
March 20 -- Tour-Type Modified -- 300 laps

## WINTER ■ from page 10

play is limited to teams in the region. One bubble will feature all of the teams in the Berry Division, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Minnechaug, Westfield, and West Springfield, with Amherst added into the league this year. Amherst has been one of the top Division 3A teams in recent years.

Teams that are allowed to begin playing actual games could do so in about two weeks.

Basketball, swimming, and ice hockey were the sports approved to take place this winter. The season normally starts in mid-December.



## FOOTBALL ■ from page 10

actually take place before Thanksgiving, and teams would again play Thanksgiving games as exhibitions.

With all the proposals out, the Football Committee has developed a survey to be sent to principals and athletic directors for feedback. A decision on the playoff format will hopefully be made sometime in the spring in time for scheduling to take place.

As of press time, the MIAA has not made any decision



Could rival matchups on Thanksgiving be in danger depending on what direction the MIAA goes in for playoffs. FILE PHOTO

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Socially, St. Mary's is a community built upon a foundation of kindness, acceptance, and integrity. It is a community in which each member looks out for the other, and the bonds of friendship that are formed here, last a lifetime.

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ple who understand that faith is a lifelong journey of prayer, learning, and service, which broadens their perspective and leads toward ever deeper communion with God and others.

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Recently, we have embarked on several initiatives that have added to the success of St. Mary's overall program. We have been blessed with the financial ability to improve upon technology, and were able to introduce a laptop program where each student is provided a laptop for a very small lease fee. After 3 years, the laptop officially belongs to the student. Meanwhile, if anything at

all happens to the laptop, the repair is covered and the student is offered a loaner. Our curriculum is based on the Great Books and we use a university schedule, allowing us to increase electives in our course of studies and at the same time, better preparing students for college. Lastly, our students are offered the choice hundreds of VHS courses, which allow them to take advantage of specialized courses outside of our traditional college prep, honors and AP course offerings.

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Plan a shadow day at St. Mary's Parish High School – where no student will be denied enrollment based on financial need, and every student will be an important member of the SAINT family!

## St. Joan of Arc School announces new principal

St. Joan of Arc School is happy to announce that William McDonald is our new principal beginning January 4, 2021. Mr. McDonald has been a vice principal and principal for over 15 years. Starting as a teacher and working his way to being a principal in Framingham, MA, he most recently was at an elementary school in Thompsonville, CT. SJA School is an elementary school with grades PreK through grade 8. We welcome his experience and knowledge and he is excited to become part of our SJA community.

## Professions that may be thriving in 2030

New Year's resolutions can serve as valuable motivational tools as people look to make positive changes in their lives. Health-related goals like quitting smoking and losing weight annually appear at or near the top of lists documenting the most popular resolutions. But many people also see New Year's resolutions as a great vehicle to kick-start positive changes in their professional lives.

PROFESSIONS | page 16

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# Westfield State University offering Addiction Counselor Education Program

WESTFIELD — The College of Graduate and Continuing Education at Westfield State University is currently accepting applications for the 2021/2022 Addiction Counselor Education (ACE) Program. Classes will be held in a hybrid format on evenings and weekends beginning in September and ending in May.

The goal of this non-credit certificate program, offered at the University since 1991, is to

provide students with the knowledge, skills, and techniques necessary for the successful treatment of individuals and families afflicted by alcoholism and/or other drug addictions. This program has been highly instrumental in the professional development of individuals in the western Massachusetts area whom are currently working in or interested in becoming a part of the growing healthcare field

of addiction services.

The application and application instructions for the ACE program can be found on the website [www.westfield.ma.edu/ace](http://www.westfield.ma.edu/ace). For more information or to have an application mailed to you, contact Brandon Fredette at [bfredette@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:bfredette@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-8033.

Founded in 1839 by Horace Mann, Westfield State University is an education leader

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For more information, visit us at [www.westfield.ma.edu](http://www.westfield.ma.edu), follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/westfieldstate](http://www.twitter.com/westfieldstate), or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WestfieldStateUniversity>.

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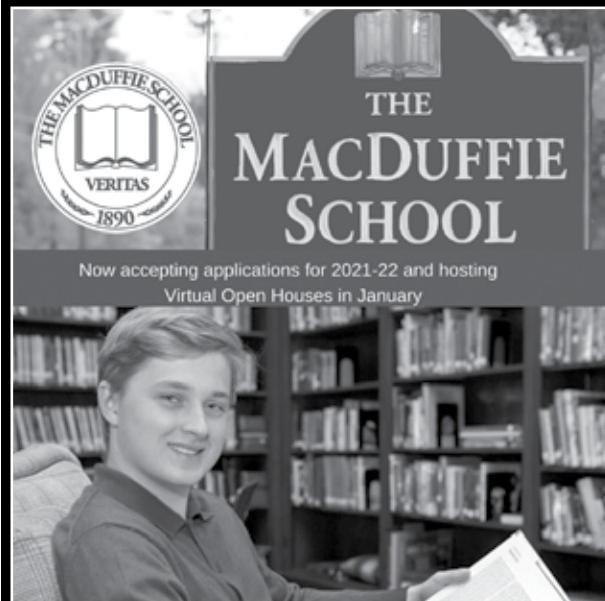
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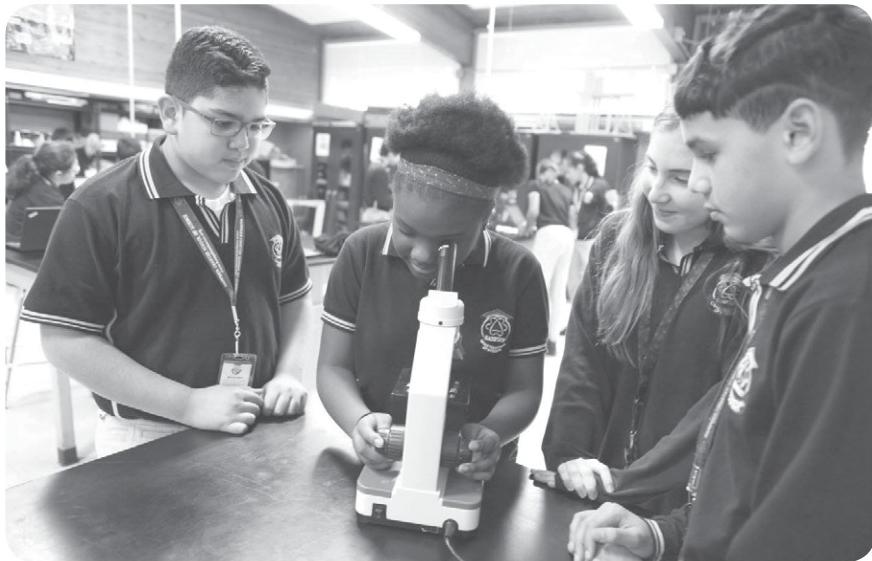




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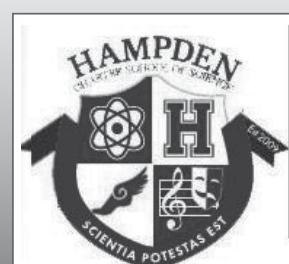
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In addition to teaching, Head Start also has various career opportunities in the areas of health, nutrition, human services, administration, mental health and special education. Professional development opportunities and career ladders are built within the Head Start model to promote growth and advancement.

Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc. offers programs in several cities and towns in Western Massachusetts working with over 1,000 children each year. If you are interested in a Head Start career please visit [www.hcsheadstart.org](http://www.hcsheadstart.org) or call 413-788-6522.

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## 6 steps to organize your home office

Remote working has become popular in recent years, but the "working-from-home" economy bloomed exponentially as the world was forced to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom, as of summer 2020, 42 percent of the United States labor force was working from home full-time.

The need for home office spaces has increased as more people work from home. Many people have retrofitted various spaces around their homes into areas to get work done. More organized home work spaces can increase productivity. Individuals can follow these guidelines to create effective, organized home offices.

### Begin with the desk

The desk is the primary spot where work will take place. The right desk accessories can provide visual appeal and also serve practical purposes. Have cups for holding pens and pencils, baskets and bins for larger items, and store whatever you can elsewhere so it does not lead to clutter on the desk. Store wireless printers in a cabinet or even on a bookshelf so it doesn't take up real estate on the desk.

### Create a printing station

While you're moving that wireless printer elsewhere, designate a space to serve as the central printing hub. This way children who need to print assignments for school will



know where to go as well. Printer supplies like extra ink cartridges and printer paper can be kept in decorative storage boxes nearby.

### Increase your shelving

Shelving can help keep items organized and off the desk in home offices without closets or drawers. Look for shelves that blend in with decor but are sturdy enough to be functional.

### Organize paperwork

Figure out a system that works for you to help tidy up papers you choose to save. While some papers can be scanned and stored as digital files, color-coded file folders can organize statements and other important documents. This makes it easy to find the folder you need when looking for certain documents.

### Establish a charging station

Repurpose certain items, such as a desk organizer, into an easily accessible electronics charging station where phones and tablets can charge at one time.

### Make essential binders

HGTV suggests making binders that can store the most important papers for easy access — even in an emergency. Set up a binder for automotive paperwork, including repair receipts, a medical binder where key medical records are kept, a binder for manuals for devices in the home, and one to store financial planning documents.

These organizational tips can help remedy common problems around a home office.

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**PROFESSIONS** ■ from page 12

According to Statista, finding a new job was the eighth most popular New Year's resolution in 2019. And finding a new job figures to be an even more common resolution for 2021, as the global COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has sparked a recession that saw millions of people across the globe lose their jobs.

Professionals who want to switch careers in the near future may want to consider professions that are expected to experience significant growth in the years ahead. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for the following professionals is expected to grow considerably between now and 2029.

- **Wind turbine service technicians**  
Expected growth (between 2019 and 2029): 60.7 percent

- **Nurse practitioners**  
Expected growth: 52.4 percent

- **Solar photovoltaic installers**  
Expected growth: 50.5 percent
- **Occupational therapy assistants**  
Expected growth: 34.6 percent
- **Statisticians**  
Expected growth: 34.6 percent
- **Home health and personal care aides**  
Expected growth: 33.7 percent
- **Physical therapist assistants**  
Expected growth: 32.6 percent
- **Medical and health services managers**  
Expected growth: 31.5 percent
- **Physician assistants**  
Expected growth: 31.3 percent
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**JOB POSTING****Community Engagement Coordinator***Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership & Town of Ware***Overall Duties:**

The Community Engagement Coordinator will work closely with local, town-based prevention teams to strategically initiate, coordinate and sustain proven prevention strategies aimed at reducing underage youth and young adult alcohol, nicotine, marijuana and prescription drug use. Will attend local prevention teams meetings, assist with outreach and recruitment of local team members and will assist the local teams to create and implement annual action plans that are fully aligned with region-wide goals, objectives and action plans. He/she will work with local team 'captains' to engender support for substance use prevention. Will also work as part of the broader Prevention Partnership team to contribute to and ensure that required fiscal and programmatic reports are completed.

**Qualifications:**

B.A. or B.S in Public Health or related field preferred. Prior experience in health-related outreach/communications, meeting facilitation, community organizing and health planning.

Knowledge of and skilled at outreach, follow-up, data collection, community presentations. Excellent writing skills, including reports and promotional materials; knowledge of the workings of municipal government; strong computer skills including knowledge of social media tools. Must demonstrate: sensitivity to, and awareness of cultural, racial, ethnic, economic, and social diversity including LGBTQ; awareness of community strengths and culture; ability to interact with a variety of stakeholders; ability to work independently and as part of a team; ability to maintain objectivity, fairness in dealing with people.

**Salary & Hours:**

Position is a town of Ware employee and funded by a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); position is 28 hours per week with potential for the job to become full-time in the future. Hours are primarily 9-5 Monday through Friday; some evening/weekend meetings and events.

**To apply for the position, E-mail a Cover Letter and Resume to:**

Gail Gramarossa, Project Director, Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership  
[ggramarossa@townofware.com](mailto:ggramarossa@townofware.com)

# Bringing diversity into STEM fields is this STCC grad's mission in life

By LAURIE LOISEL

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Vastly underrepresented in the STEM field, women and people of color often feel marginalized and unsupported in the halls of academia. That was true for Carolyn Gardner-Thomas until she came to Springfield Technical Community College, where she graduated in 1998 with an associate degree in engineering.

"STCC is where I found community — that's where I found people who looked like me and people who wanted to work with me, smaller classes, instructors I could connect with," she said. "That, coupled with the fact that it fit my budget. I could pay for the courses I was taking."

After STCC, Gardner-Thomas went on to UMass Amherst where she earned a bachelor's degree in engineering in 2000 — and years later she would go on to earn a Ph.D. in STEM education at the state's flagship campus. STEM refers to the areas of study and careers within science, technology, engineering and math disciplines. It's no secret that women and people of color don't flock to those fields.

Gardner-Thomas has devoted her career to expanding the possibilities for women and Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) in STEM, encouraging greater diversity in the field she loves. She credits her time at STCC, in part, with helping her understand how that could be done.

She ran a STEM starter academy at Holyoke Community College for a year, at UMass for three years she directed

the STEM Ambassador Program and today is co-director of the Mathematics for Teaching master's program at the Harvard Extension School.

Aminah Bergeron, in her second year at STCC majoring in mechanical engineering, is just the kind of student Gardner-Thomas wants to see entering the field. Bergeron, 27, who calls herself a "proud mom" and is working her way through college, said she has felt both welcomed and supported at STCC.

She remembers early-on a meeting with Professor Zahi Haddad when she expressed doubt about her abilities in computer science, asking if he thought she could do it. "And he responded immediately, 'yes, why not? You can do whatever you like,'" she said.

Later, thanks to encouragement from STCC Professor of Engineering and Physical Sciences Beth McGinnis-Cavanaugh, Bergeron took part in a competitive NASA program that flew her to a NASA facility in Virginia for a week. She aims to go on for a bachelor's degree in engineering after STCC, hoping eventually to land a job as an engineer at Pratt and Whitney. But she's got an even bigger dream: One day she wants to become a CEO.

Bergeron's experience may illustrate how much things have changed since Gardner-Thomas first entered the STEM field as a pre-med student in the 1980s.

Born on the Caribbean island of Antigua, Gardner-Thomas came to the United States in 1986 to attend college.

Please see **STCC**, next page

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## Enrichment clusters still valuable during the pandemic

(One of the experiences lost last spring when we pivoted to remote instruction was the enrichment cluster. As we look ahead to this spring, we are excited to plan re-imagined clusters as we continue in-person instruction for all students at Academy Hill. To learn more about our response to the pandemic, please visit our website at [www.AcademyHill.org](http://www.AcademyHill.org)!)

At AHS, one of the most cherished and highly anticipated academic traditions are end-of-the-year enrichment clusters. Clusters, as they are more commonly known at Academy Hill, are held during a reserved three-day period the final week of school. Clusters provide students with an opportunity to explore a topic of their choice, in the company of a mixed-age group of schoolmates, in extraordinary depth. Clusters culminate with a showcase, during which students display a project or product created, or a skill acquired during the three-day period. Clusters are facilitated by school staff, parents, alumni and other community members who relish this opportunity to share their passions and professions with students.

Over the years, students have explored such diverse topics as cheesemaking, entomology, the art of pysanky, silk screen printing, dogs, and rocketry. Many of the ideas for cluster topics are generated by student interest, as exhibited over the school year. Clusters most often include a field trip or two, allowing students the chance to meet professional practitioners and take part in authentic experiences. During the last cluster cycle, a small group of middle school students explored the play Hamlet, by William Shakespeare. The cluster was facilitated by our middle school literacy teacher and an alumni parent (who is also a professor of English, specializing in Shakespeare). Cluster participants took a trip to Shakespeare & Co. in Lenox, where they enjoyed a private, customized tour that included visits to performance spaces, costume and prop shops, and the set design studio. At each location students were able to try on and try out costume pieces and props such as crowns and swords. The field trip brought their classroom cluster experience into vivid focus, sparking a strong desire in several students to learn more about Shakespeare and theater. Another cluster cooked its way through Italy, learning about the geography, culture and special cuisines of the different regions of the country. The students, ranging in grade level from 4th through 8th grade, learned a bit of the language, chose a particular region to explore in greater depth, and visited both Red Rose Pizzeria and La Fiorentina Bakery - right here in Springfield - to sample dishes and to learn more about Italian cooking and baking. The cluster was facilitated by an administrator of Italian heritage, as well as our Latin and Classics teacher; the latter bringing her vast knowledge of the Italian peninsula to the experience. The cluster culminated in a day of preparing and then



sharing the students' homemade Italian food with guests.

Families, homeschool groups and moms/dads clubs might easily replicate the enrichment cluster experience for their own children and their friends. Clusters are a wonderful way to pass several days during a school vacation week. They also give new meaning to staycations, and might serve to prevent a "summer slide" as they help energize students before the return to school in September. Clusters can be quite manageable to organize and carry out, with just a little pre-planning. Start with what interests your children. When you pick a top that fascinates children, you pave the way for a fun, interactive experience. The first day should include an exploration of the topic, providing an opportunity for the children to learn more about the subject of the cluster. You might use clips from documentaries, you might take a trip to the local library, or you might create an extensive web search and scavenger hunt based on the topic. On day one you can also decide what project you might want to create or what skill you might want to cultivate as you learn more about this topic. Usually, day three or four is reserved for creating and showcasing projects and skills. Next, explore what businesses, museums, historical sites, farms or other places in the area might be open to a visit. Clusters are most meaningful when they are authentic. Alternately, there may be a practicing professional who is open to a virtual field trip or interview. Model creativity for your children as you seek out an immersive opportunity that will allow your children to understand how their interests might turn into careers or vocations. Librarians and museum staff can be extremely helpful with this step! Finally, allow your children time to create a project or product based on what they learned, and encourage them to share their creations and new skills with others.

To learn more about Academy Hill and our unique educational programs for students PreK – grade 8, please visit [www.AcademyHill.org](http://www.AcademyHill.org). We are now accepting application for the 2021 – 2022 school year (there are limited openings in PreK and Kindergarten for the current year).

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**STCC** from previous page

A student at UMass Amherst as a pre-med major, she found herself increasingly unhappy.

"I felt like it was a space that did not welcome me and who I was, and it wasn't that anybody was mean," she said. "You feel yourself to be excluded and invisible yet in other ways hyper-visible."

She quit the program in her senior year and worked in various fields, including in payroll, that used her passion and talent in mathematics. Later, working at an engineering firm, she discovered she had love for and skill in engineering, and was promoted to an engineering position without the degree. The company encouraged her to earn her degree, which is when she enrolled at STCC and found her home.

Gardner-Thomas believes what she found at STCC – and what can be offered in an intentional way at other institutions – is building a sense of community for people who feel sidelined and invisible by offering study groups, inviting people for dinner, having social events, "so you feel like you have a family away from your home." Another strategy is to pair-up newer students with others who are more seasoned in a supportive, mentoring relationship.

"That is what I instill in the students I work with – that as you go through, you pave the way for others to come through," she said.

Women on the STEM faculty at STCC are trying to do just that. McGinnis-Cavanaugh, a 1998 STCC graduate, said she was very often the only woman in the classroom during her time at STCC and also at UMass, where she graduated in 2001. And the numbers of women in STEM majors are still too low, she contends, which is why in 2014 she started a STCC chapter of the Society of Women Engineers and opened it to all women in any STEM major.

"I just thought it would be great for our students to have an organization that valued them," she said. "It just really opens their eyes to what's out there in the world in terms of STEM pathways."

McGinnis-Cavanaugh says over her 16 years on the STCC faculty, while she's seen improvement in the situation for women in STEM, she's not satisfied.

"I think it's better, but I don't think it's good," she said. "I think we have a ways to go on that."

Barbara Washburn, interim dean of the STEM school at STCC, said she believes raising awareness in the general public about what STEM fields are will help open doors for women, as do special programs that provide guidance and mentorship to young women in the field.

Gardner-Thomas contends STCC is an institution that in a sense has no choice but to be welcoming because of the people who attend.



**Carolyn Gardner-Thomas Beth McGinnis-Cavanaugh Aminah Bergeron**

"Naturally you will see people that look like you. I'm a big advocate for community colleges that sit in the inner city," she said. "That is an environment that has to be welcoming because that's who's there."

Meanwhile, Gardner-Thomas was among several speakers featured at a STEM careers symposium held in October 2020. In her talk, she ticked off a list of the problems facing the world that the STEM field will be instrumental in addressing, issues such as health crises (including COVID), climate challenges, food and water insecurity, and equity in education.

"The list is long and we need you – we need all of who you are. We need people that look like you with your unique identities and intersectionalities of identities so if you are an immigrant, Black, a woman like

myself, we need your experiences; we need your background," she said. "This is the way we're going to be able to solve problems."

Aminah Bergeron is among those who has gotten that message loud and clear.

"STEM has always been a male-dominated field, but with the future generation we can change that," she said. "I encourage women to pursue a career in STEM. When women come together and work with each other, we come up with ideas that are out of the ordinary."

Interested in applying to STCC? Visit [stcc.edu/apply](http://stcc.edu/apply) or call Admissions at (413) 755-3333.

About Springfield Technical Community College

STCC, the Commonwealth's only technical community college, continues the pioneering

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## JOB POSTING

# Youth Engagement Coordinator *Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership & Town of Ware*

### **Overall Duties:**

The Youth Engagement Coordinator will strategically identify, recruit, and engage with individuals and organizations serving youth and young adults to bring a 'youth voice' and participation into planning processes and activities that deliver proven prevention strategies to reduce youth substance use in the Quaboag Hills region. The Youth Engagement Coordinator will continually help build the capacity of and sustain the Partnership's work with youth on underage drinking, nicotine and marijuana use, insuring that programs and activities are youth-driven and youth-led. Will work with Prevention Partnership team to ensure that required reports and data collection are completed.

### **Qualifications:**

B.A. or B.S in Public Health or related field preferred. Prior experience in health-related outreach/communications with youth and young adults, community organizing and health planning. Understands unique needs of and works effectively with youth/ young

adults. Excellent writing skills, including promotional/outreach materials; knowledge of the workings of municipal government; strong computer skills including knowledge of social media tools that reach youth. Must demonstrate: sensitivity to, and awareness of cultural, racial, ethnic, economic, and social diversity including LGBTQ; awareness of community strengths and rural culture; ability to interact with a variety of stakeholders; ability to work independently and as part of a team; ability to maintain objectivity, fairness in dealing with people.

### **Salary & Hours:**

Position is a Town of Ware employee and funded by a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); position 28 hours per week with potential for the job to become full-time in the future. Hours are primarily 9-5 Monday through Friday; some evening/weekend meetings and events.

**To apply for the position, E-mail a Cover Letter and Resume to:**

**Gail Gramarossa, Project Director, Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership**  
**[ggramarossa@townofware.com](mailto:ggramarossa@townofware.com)**



[www.QHSUA.org](http://www.QHSUA.org)



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## HCC-MRC program trains disabled for cybersecurity jobs

HOLYOKE – Not long ago, Aidan Burke was working in a local supermarket, making pizza for minimum wage. It was not a job he believed held much promise for him.

Life has changed a lot since then for the 29-year-old Northampton resident.

In February, Burke started a free, intensive cybersecurity training program for people with disabilities offered by Holyoke Community College and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Ten months later, he is now poised to begin a career as a cybersecurity analyst.

Already, Burke has started an internship with NetWerks Strategic Services, an Agawam-based technology company. In recent weeks, he has interviewed for full-time benefit positions at the Massachusetts Educational Collaborative and the Department of Youth Services. He is also a candidate for a summer internship with MassMutual.

Burke and his 14 classmates completed the Cisco Academy Cybersecurity Training program on Dec. 10. They graduated Dec. 18, having passed their exams as Cisco Certified Network Associates and Cisco Certified Cyber-Operations Associates.

The HCC-MRC cybersecurity training program was the first of its kind in the state. Based on the success of the pilot, MRC initiated a second program in September in collaboration with Roxbury Community College and has begun recruiting for a second class at HCC that will begin in February.

For the first month of training, classes met in the cybersecurity lab in HCC's Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development. In March, though, they moved onto Zoom as COVID-19 forced a shift to remote instruction. HCC and MRC provided laptops for students to use at home, and Cisco provided access to online simulation platforms that mimicked the "hands-on" parts of the training.

Students qualified for the program through their involvement with MRC. Burke was recommended by his caseworker. Candidates were

screened and then took an entrance exam to make sure they could handle the material and the workload.

Classes met four days a week, Monday through Thursday from about 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Singh said the students were also required to put in several hours of additional self-study on Fridays.

Cybersecurity analysts are network watchdogs, monitoring network activity, tracking alerts, guarding against cyberattacks and looking out for abnormal network behavior. They fix security problems, restore compromised systems, pinpoint conflicts, and collect evidence of criminal activity in the event of an intentional breach or legal proceeding.

"Cyber crime is up 600 percent due to the pandemic," HCC president Christina Royal said Friday during a graduation ceremony held over Zoom. There are a lot of bad actors looking to exploit network vulnerabilities with costs estimated at \$6 trillion in 2021. Cybersecurity is an important area that companies are needing and investing in."

Program graduates qualify for jobs as tier 1 cybersecurity analysts. Although that is considered entry level, they can still expect to earn between \$25 and \$35 an hour to start and up to \$80,000 to \$100,000 or more a year as they advance.

Beyond the training itself, students in the program received a \$200 stipend for general expenses, career counseling and assistance with job placement.

Like many of his classmates, Burke has struggled with a number of issues, including anxiety as well as depression, PTSD and ADHD. "Just a tough combination of things," he said, that made it tough at times just to get out of bed in the morning.

Burke said he's grateful to Mass Rehab for recommending him for the program and for putting him in a class with others who shared and understood his struggles. It was a big confidence builder for all of them.

## Proposed changes to help prevent wildfire and protect power grid

The USDA Forest Service seeks public input on two proposed directives that would address safety and reliability for powerline operations on national forests and grasslands. The proposed directives would implement provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill and amendments made in 2018 to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The proposed directives also align with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue's direction to make national forests and grasslands healthier and more productive.

The proposed changes would provide consistent direction for Forest Service staff when coordinating with utilities in managing vegetation, including removing dead and dying trees that pose a fire risk to powerline structures. These policy initiatives include new procedures for streamlining reviews and approvals for vegetation management and maintenance for powerlines.

"Our nation's forests and grasslands provide an important link in delivering electricity to 70 million American homes and businesses," said Forest Service Deputy Chief Chris French. "The proposed directives would not only help us improve the reliability of America's electrical grid, but also would help reduce wildfire risk in powerline corridors and the cost of delivering electricity to millions of homes."

The 30-day public comment period for the proposed directives, detailed below, end on Jan. 11, 2021.

**Operating Plans and Agreements for Powerline Facilities**

This proposed directive would add Chapter 80 to Forest Service

Handbook 2709.11 to provide guidance on vegetation management, routine maintenance, and inspection of powerlines within and adjacent to their authorized rights-of-way on national forests and grasslands. These activities include removing trees that pose a hazard inside and outside powerline rights-of-way. The proposed directive would provide guidance to Forest Service staff when working with electric utilities to develop comprehensive operating plans or agreements that cover system reliability and fire mitigation activities while minimizing impacts on natural resources. The proposed directive would implement section 512 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Forest Service's recently issued regulations implementing section 512. More information on the proposed directive and how to submit comments may be found here.

**Vegetation Management Pilot Projects**

The proposed directive would add Chapter 2740 to the Forest Service Manual to provide direction to agency staff on issuing special use authorizations for natural gas or electric utilities to conduct vegetation management pilot projects. The pilot projects would involve vegetation management outside the utilities' rights-of-way, but not the removal of hazard trees associated with powerlines. The proposed directive would implement section 8630 of the 2018 Farm Bill. More information on the proposed directive and how to submit comments may be found here.

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